■ Entertainment / A2-1

Advertisers pull out of 'offensive' talk shows

■ Lifestyle / D1

The last word from John Paul the Great

■ Across / A17

6 NPA rebels, 2 cops slain in Bulacan

■ Sports / A28

Pistons grab playoff head start

■ Business / B1

SEC urged to probe Pacific Plans' books

Malacañang blows hot and cold on pay hike

ANO YAN, LABAN O BAWI?

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FIRST the good news: There will be a wage increase.

Then the bad news: But not now.

Malacañang appears to

MALACAÑANG/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

77 Mangyan couples join mass wedding

By Marlet D. Salazar

SEVENTY-SEVEN couples from the Mangyan Taubuhid tribal group walked down the aisle—some barefoot, in gowns or *barong* Tagalog—and were wed in a civil ceremony on Friday at the municipal park of Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro.

77 MANGYAN/ A22

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Monday, April 25, 2005 ★★ 84 pages / 8 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 136 P18
website: www.inq7.net

DFA official strangled by robbers

3 men break into Makati home

By Tarra V. Quismundo

EVERY morning at sunrise, Filipino diplomat Alicia Ramos' younger sister, Leticia, would open the door of their house in Makati City to sweep their front yard.

Little did Leticia know that when she unlocked the front door at 5:30 a.m. yesterday, three hooded men were lurking outside.

Apparently robbers, they jumped on her, gagged and tied her up, then proceeded to the second floor of the house and—using a white towel—strangled Alicia, a 64-year-old foreign affairs assistant secretary, police said.

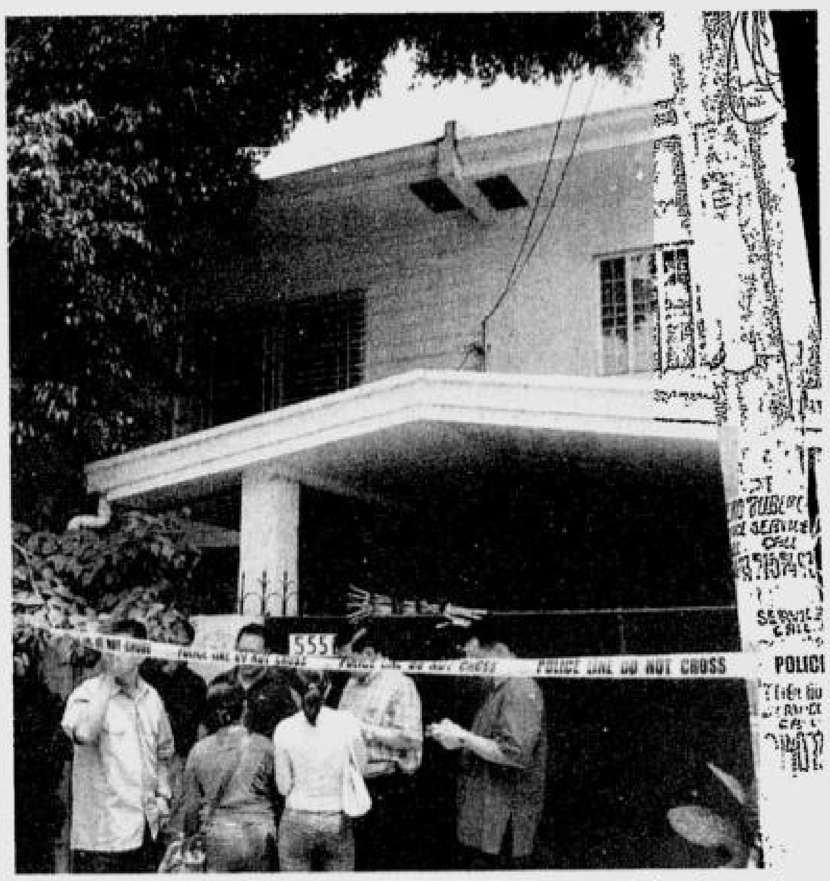
A normally quiet morning routine in the lives of the two unmarried sisters had turned into a violent tragedy that caused shock in diplomatic quarters.

The Ramoses lived alone together in a two-story house at 5552 Boyle St., Barangay Palanan in Makati.

Cigarette butts littered the room where Ramos

DFA OFFICIAL/ A21

ASSISTANT Foreign Secretary Alicia Ramos: Her violent death in the hands of three hooded intruders shocks foreign community.



POLICE officials bar journalists from entering the scene of the crime—the two-story house at 5552 Boyle St., Barangay Palanan, Makati City. ERIK ARAZAS

'A brilliant, efficient and quiet diplomat'

By Nikko Dizon and PDI Research

IT JUST wasn't the kind of farewell that friends and colleagues of Alicia Ramos would want to remember.

Ramos, who had spent half her life at the Department of Foreign Affairs and was assistant secretary for Asia and Pacific Affairs, was set to retire next year.

But instead of toasts in her honor, the entire department and members of the diplomatic community ended up mourning her violent death in her Makati home.

Described by her colleagues as a quiet person, Ramos found herself in a diplomatic storm in 1995 while she was the country's top diplomat in Singapore.

The tempest was triggered by the execution of maid Flor Contemplacion for the murder of her 4-year-old Singaporean ward and another Filipino maid, Delia Maga.

The execution sparked widespread protests following allegations that Ramos and other embassy officials had failed to give the necessary assistance to the maid when she was being tried in court.

The controversy led to Ramos' recall home.

Her killing yesterday caused outrage in diplomatic circles.

"She was very brilliant, hardworking, efficient and quiet," Foreign Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin said in a phone interview.

Ebdalin, the acting secretary while Secretary Alberto Romulo is abroad, said he rushed to his colleague's

A BRILLIANT/ A21

POPE Benedict XVI waves after receiving the insignia of papal office—a woolen pallium or shawl and the Fisherman's Ring—before celebrating his first Mass in St. Peter's Square. AFP

'Jueteng' trio dictate on PNP posts?

By Luige A. del Puerto

THREE relatives of a top government official have been dictating who will get the top police posts in provinces with huge *jueteng* payola, according to a ranking police official.

In exchange, they get a substantial cut of whatever the police officials get as payoffs from the illegal numbers game.

"They're the influence peddlers. They get you a post, you give them a cut in your jueteng take," the police official told the INQUIRER, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The difference now," he said, "is that these three persons get both from the police officials and from the jueteng operators. That's how greedy they are."

In just one region in Luzon, they get a total of P2 million a

JUETENG/ A22

Assault on activists alarms CHR

By Norman Bordadora

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE COMMISSION on Human Rights (CHR) has expressed alarm over the "seemingly systematic" assault on left-leaning activists over the past few months.

Since the start of the year, at least 20 leaders and members of militant groups have been killed across the country by armed men suspected of having links with the military.

"[The spate of killings] seems to be systematic. Those being killed are all members of Bayan Muna [and their allies]," CHR Commissioner Dominador Calamba II said in an interview.

The commission will take up the killings of leftist leaders when it meets en banc today, he said.

Those killed were either members of party-list groups, such as Bayan Muna and Anakpawis, people's organizations such as Bagong Alyansang

ASSAULT/ A4

Pope Benedict XVI formally begins Church stewardship

VATICAN CITY—Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church on Sunday, reaching out to Jews, other Christians and "nonbelievers alike," and asking for prayers from the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and dignitaries gathered in St. Peter's Square as he assumes "this enormous task."

The former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was known as the iron hand enforcing church orthodoxy, made clear in his installation homily that as pope, he would listen along with the Church to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

"My real program of governance is not to do my own will, not to pursue my own ideas, but to listen, together with the whole Church, to the word and the will of the Lord, to be guided by Him so that He himself will lead the Church at this hour of our history," he said in his homily, read in Italian.

Wearing golden vestments and clutching his pastoral staff, Pope Benedict began the ceremony by leading a procession into the area under St. Peter's Basilica where St. Peter is believed to be buried, paying homage to the first pope and blessing the tomb with incense as a choir chanted.

He ended the Mass by riding through the crowds in a white open-topped vehicle surrounded by guards in plainclothes. The faithful reached out to him and snapped pictures of him as bells rang.

In one of the most symbolic moments of the Mass, Pope Benedict was given his Fisherman's Ring and a woolen pallium or shawl—both symbols of his papal authority.

POPE/ A8

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Second FrontPage
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Light to moderate winds blowing from the northeast & north will prevail over Luzon, from the northwest & west over Visayas and coming from the west & southwest over Mindanao. The coastal waters throughout the archipelago will be slight to moderate.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: ERIKA SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/04/25/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Open your books, Palace tells oil firms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Norman Bordadora and Philip C. Tubeza

MALACAÑANG wants the big oil companies to be transparent and open their books to the public to erase suspicions that they are operating as a cartel and colluding with one another to manipulate the pump prices of their petroleum products.

"I think it is only proper for oil companies to open their books to avoid being accused of operating as a cartel. We all know that oil companies, particularly those with huge supplies, will always be accused as being a cartel if they are not transparent," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a radio interview.

Bunye urged the oil companies to disclose the assumptions and formula that they use in determining the prices of their petroleum products.

"What is important is to have transparency. We can only know if their assumptions and computation in pricing their products are right if they open their books," Bunye said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier ordered the Department of Energy to investigate whether domestic oil players were engaged in illicit market practices to dictate pump prices and prop up their profits.

The President was alarmed by the continued rise in oil prices by between 50 centavos and 75 centavos per liter every week since last month even though oil prices in the world market had stabilized.

The President also urged the public to patronize Petron Corp., which is 40 percent owned by the government, which has not raised its pump prices since last week unlike its chief rivals Pilipinas Shell and Caltex Philippines.

Sen. Manuel Roxas II claimed that the government had enough powers under Republic Act No. 8749, or the Oil Deregulation Law of 1998, to crack down on oil companies for their abusive market practices and that it need not wait for amendments to the law before putting the oil companies in line.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. noted that the spate of oil price increases was artificial after Petron opted not to increase its pump prices by 75 centavos per liter.

Addressing a breakfast forum in Quezon City, Pimentel said the recent oil price increases were not dictated by market forces but artificially made up by the oil companies in the country.

"World oil production is rising. No reason why prices here should go up," Pimentel said.

Pimentel cited Petron's decision not to increase its prices while other oil companies raised theirs.

On other hand, Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco urged the repeal of the oil deregulation law.

Cuenco said the continued surge in oil prices had convinced "most" of his colleagues in the House of Representatives of the need to regulate the oil industry again.

"Right now, consumers are completely under the mercy of the oil companies. We must not allow them to bleed us dry. The price of oil must be regulated," Cuenco said in an interview.

He said the successive increases in oil prices showed that the law was "not really working to prevent cartelized pricing in the domestic market."

EO on ID trial balloon, says Bunye

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

JUST a trial balloon—the real thing is yet to come.

Malacañang yesterday signified its determination to push through with a national identification system by saying that implementation of Executive Order No. 420 was only a preliminary step toward its grand goal of imposing a much broader ID plan.

"It's a test project or pilot project that if successful will make it easier for us to make it into law on a national scale, if that is what is needed," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye of EO 420 in an interview over radio station dzBB.

EO 420 seeks to unify into a single card all the IDs issued by state agencies and public corporations, such as regulatory bodies and pension fund organizations like the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System. The resulting ID will have a reference number aimed at facilitating access to basic information regarding the holder.

Bunye said the National Economic and Development Authority, tasked with putting EO 420 into effect, would draft the implementing rules and regulations for the unified government ID. But local government units (LGUs), he said, could also proceed with their own plans to adopt their own ID systems as endorsed by Malacañang last month.

"These are not mutually exclusive moves. The EO covers only government agencies under the executive branch while LGUs, with their autonomy and legislative power, can implement an ID system in their respective jurisdictions," Bunye said.

Malacanang's move to create a single national ID system has sparked a storm of protest from leftist groups and the political opposition who branded it as unconstitutional and intrusive of individual privacy.

Since President Macapagal-Arroyo signed EO 420 on April 13, Malacañang has pushed the project as a means of facilitating government and commercial transactions rather than as an antiterrorist tool, apparently in hopes of softening public opposition.

A survey showed that most Filipinos support a national ID system as an instrument to single out terrorists, but critics said it could be abused by allowing the administration to go not only after enemies of the state but also its political enemies.

"The EO is very simple. There is a lot of information spread all over different agencies and we are just integrating this information into a more efficient ID system," Bunye said. "We are only getting information that is already available and it is just a question of making it systematic."

RP-based group wins P1.7B in British lotto

LONDON—A global lottery syndicate based in the Philippines was the winner of a 16.6-million pound (P1.73 billion) British lotto jackpot, The Sunday Times newspaper reported.

Overseas Subscribers Agents (OAS), which plays European and US lotteries on behalf of members worldwide, had bought up to 14,000 tickets for the Jan. 2 draw, the sixth biggest in British lotto history.

The tickets were purchased on behalf of OAS by a retired plastics technologist, Ken Jackson, to get around a rule that restricts the National Lottery to residents of Britain and visitors to the country.

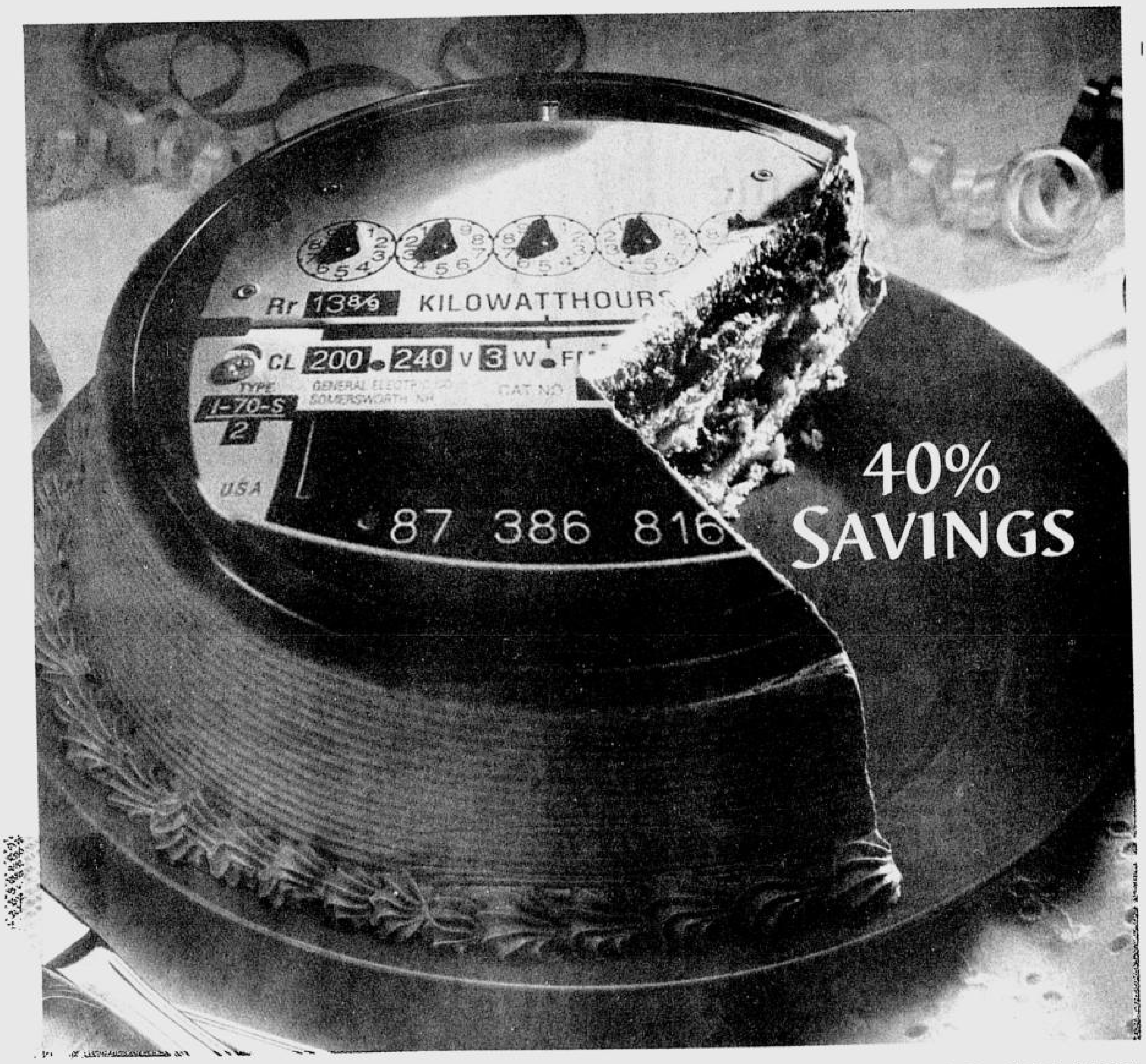
The winnings were first parked in a British bank account, gaining interest from which Jackson was given 48,000 pounds (P5 million) for his efforts, then transferred to a secret bank account in Liechtenstein, The Sunday Times said.

The size of the bank transfer was so great that the National Criminal Intelligence Service, the British police agency that specializes in organized crime, went to Norfolk to question Jackson, the newspaper said.

Camelot, which operates the National Lottery, said that while it disapproves of commercial syndicates playing its games, it would not bring charges against Jackson as he had not been told of any illegalities.

The Sunday Times said OAS is operated "by a British businessman and his Indian and New Zealand partners" out of an office in Manila. *AFP*

WITH THE INCREASE IN POWER RATES...



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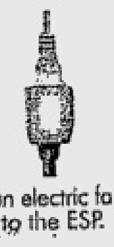
Plug an electric fan set to on to the ESP.

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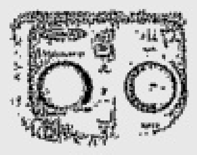
Set the aircon timer to the desired number of hours.

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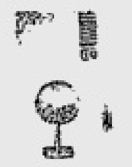
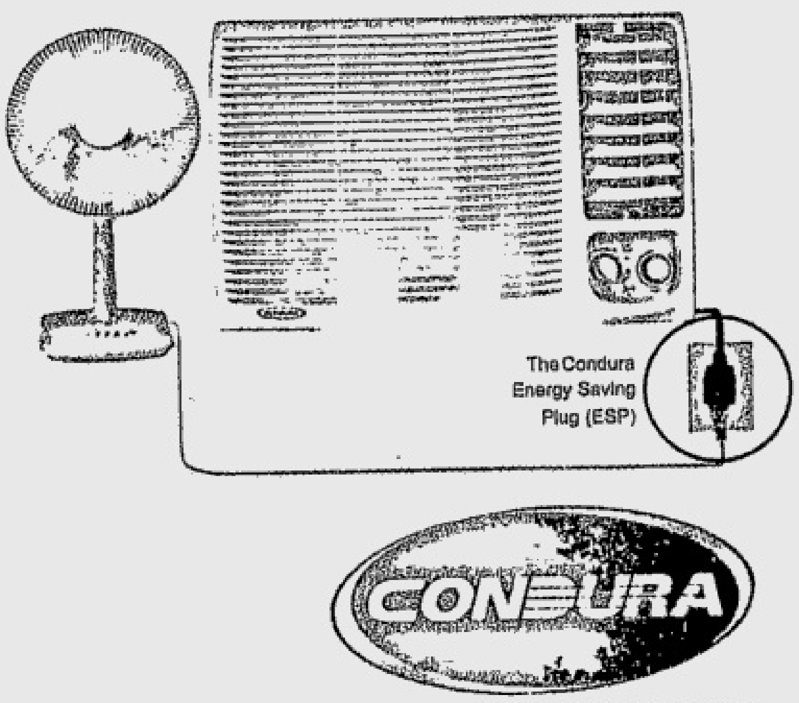

When the aircon turns off, the electric fan automatically turns on.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PEACEKEEPER IS HOME
Merly Batomalaque weeps on the casket of her late husband, M/Sgt. Antonio M. Batomalaque, which arrived early yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Batomalaque, who served with the United Nations peacekeeping force in Haiti, was killed two weeks ago by criminals in that troubled Caribbean country. ROGER MARGALLO

Militants, lawmakers buck new power rates

By Abigail L. Ho

MILITANT groups and legislators are strongly opposed to the recent hike in power rates, saying this was "unjustified."

The militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and nongovernment organization Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) blamed the rate hike on the "onerous" contracts entered into by the National Power Corp. with independent power producers.

FDC vice president Wilson Fortaleza said these contracts were the root of the state power firm's financial problems.

"The power rate increase included payments for onerous IPP contracts. Even those ineligible contracts, those not approved by the ERC (Energy Regulatory Commission) on or before Dec. 31, 2001, were also included in the rate base of Napocor," he said.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said allowing Napocor to raise its rates only showed that the ERC tolerated these "onerous" contracts which would likely lead to even higher rates in the future.

Reyes said the implementation of a 10-percent value-added tax (VAT) on power would result in even more rate hikes.

He estimated that the VAT would jack up power rates by as much as P100 a month, based on a 200-kWh-a-month consumption.

Fortaleza urged the government to instead cancel these "onerous" contracts if it wanted to plug Napocor's money drain.

"Unless the government cancels these contracts, the people will suffer Napocor's continuing rates increases," he said.

Lanao del Norte Rep. Alipio Cirilo Badelles, chair of the House committee on energy, said he would seek a probe into the higher power rates.

In particular, Badelles is questioning the approved rate adjustments for Mindanao which he said were unjustified because of the island's high dependence on hydroelectric power for its electricity needs.

"Unlike the other island grids wherein the supply is generated by imported fuel like coal and bunker, in Mindanao, since it is 60 percent (dependent on) hydro, there should be less upward adjustments on fuel and power purchased from (independent power producers)," he said in a statement.

On Friday, the ERC granted Napocor a rate increase of 5.56 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) on top of the provisional increase of 98 centavos per kWh given in September last year.

ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said the approved rate hike levels were all "justified" and had more than enough basis.

Albano challenged solons to scrutinize all the documents that the ERC used as bases for the approval of the Napocor rate adjustment.

GMA urged to pick ARMM bet quickly

TO AVOID infighting among the administration's allies, a lawmaker from Mindanao yesterday asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to promptly pick her candidates for the Aug. 8 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

House Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin said the President should announce the administration candidates for governor and vice governor following the Commission on Elections' resolution setting for April 22-30 the period for the filing of certificates of candidacy.

"In view of (this), there is now an urgency that the President and the Lakas party must announce sooner than later the anointed candidates for ARMM governor and vice governor," Salapuddin said.

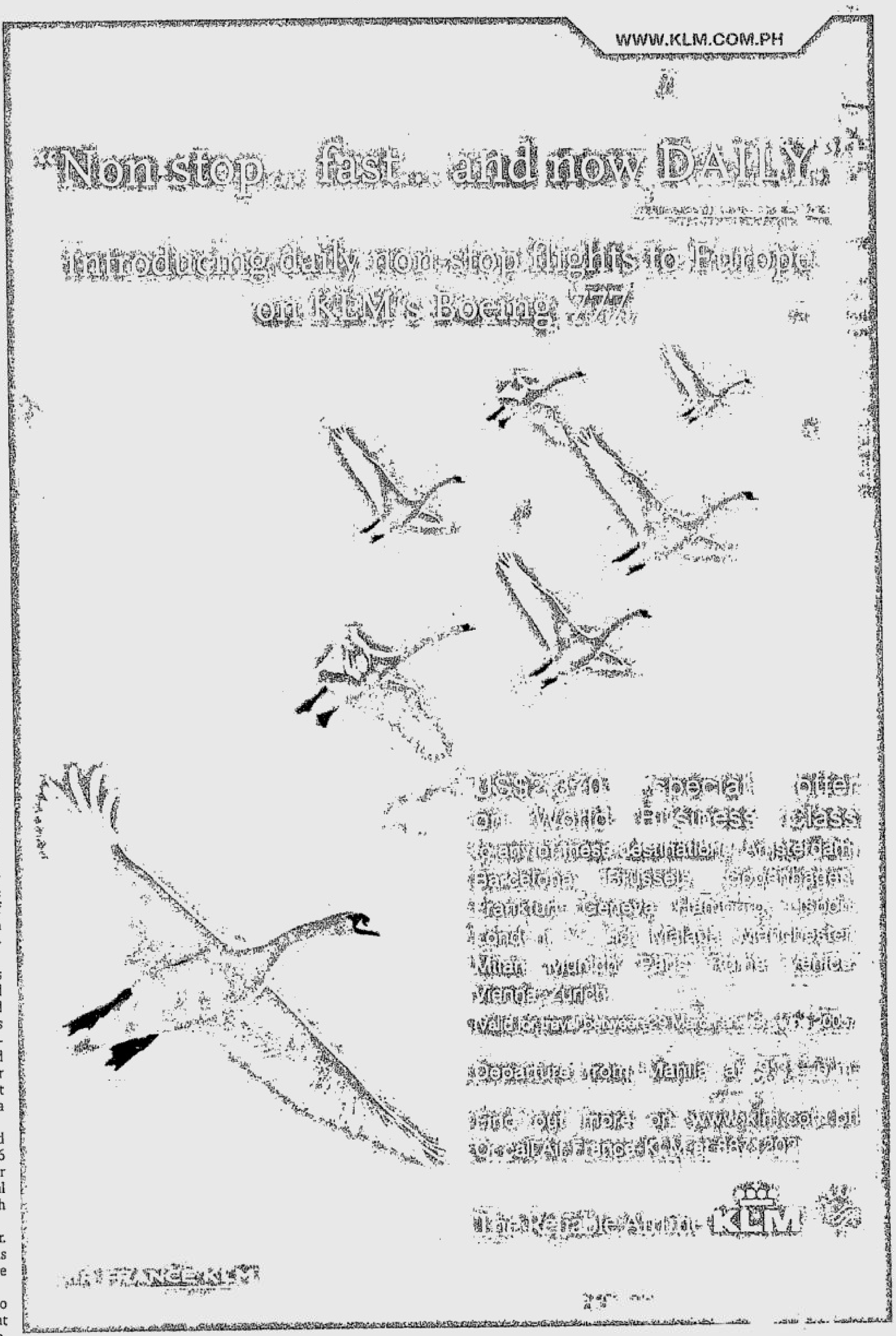
Aside from the top two posts, the Muslim region will also be replacing the 24 members of the Regional Legislative Assembly.

Salapuddin made the call after the Malacañang search committee endorsed a Maguindanaon, Shariff Aguak Mayor Zaldy Ampatuan, as the administration candidate.

But Teresita Deles, the President's peace adviser and the committee chair, said the last word would still have to come from Ms Arroyo, although there was an unwritten rule among administration party members that the ARMM governorship would be rotated among the leaders of its major tribal groups.

Besides Ampatuan, the search committee also listed as possible candidates Dimas Pundato of the Moro National Liberation Front reformist group, MNLF chair Hatimil Hassan, ARMM Assemblyman Esmael Abubakar of Tawi-Tawi, former ARMM Vice Gov. Mahid Mutilan, ARMM Social Welfare Secretary Bainon Karon, MNLF official Alvares Isnaji and businessman Ibrahim Paglas.

Salapuddin, who was on the list, reminded Malacañang the choice of the administration candidates should be based on the standard criteria and qualities prescribed by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). *Michael Lim Ubac*



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Assault on activists alarms CHR

From page A1

Makabayan (Bayan) and the peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), or human rights workers, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

These groups were among those tagged by the military as "already infiltrated" or "targets for infiltration" by the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed group, the New People's Army (NPA), in a controversial briefing material titled "Knowing the Enemy."

Included on Karapatan's list of "political assassinations" were the deaths of Felidito Dacut, a human rights lawyer in Eastern Samar, and of William Tadena, an Aglipayan priest sympathetic to the cause of striking farmers and workers at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac.

"[Attorney Dacut] was a former lawyer of the (CHR). When he left, he joined Bayan Muna. We are investigating his case," Calamba said.

Karapatan's records show that an activist was killed in January, eight in February, nine in March and two in April. *(See list on this page.)* The assassinations happened in Baguio City, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Bataan, Quezon, Camarines Norte, Cebu, Leyte and Samar.

During the period, 13 other civilians, who were suspected of being members of the NPA or of the Moro National Liberation Front, were killed in military operations, said Karapatan secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez.

Among them were four members of the Padiwan family, who were killed in Maimbung, Sulu, on Feb. 1.

Unprecedented

Because the assassinations are committed against militant and human rights groups with "unprecedented" frequency, Karapatan suspects that the attacks are part of a plan to check the influence of left-leaning organizations.

"We believe these are not isolated incidents. We see a pattern. These are systematic killings, probably part of a government policy [against militants]," Enriquez said.

She said Karapatan considered the killings part of "an undeclared martial rule."

The human rights group was not alone in its assessment.

Missing

The group Plaridel noted that 51 coordinators and members of Bayan Muna and 19 from its allied party-list group Anakpawis had been killed since 2001. It said 10 people had been abducted and were still missing.

"The death toll is also mounting on other progressive party-list [groups], as well as militant people's and human rights organizations. Just as alarming is the number of other civilians, mostly peasant folk, slain on mere suspicion of having leftist links," Plaridel said in a statement against the killings of activists.

It said the victims came from such diverse backgrounds as those of Bayan-Ilocos secretary general Romy Sanchez, a radio broadcaster, and Anakpawis and KMP leader Ben Concepcion.

Silence

"Does government silence and inaction indicate that it officially sanctions the repression?" Plaridel said.

Sanchez was killed on March 9 and Concepcion on March 17. Dacut was killed on March 14.

"While the ink on our [investigation] report on one case has yet to dry, another killing happens," Enriquez said.

Although a CHR official sees a pattern, he doesn't say that the military is behind the killings.

"I can say that it is systematic. But I can't say it's done by soldiers," Calamba said.

Finger-pointing

He observed that the military and militant groups tended to exchange accusations whenever an activist was killed.

"Bayan Muna, Karapatan and their allies would say that the soldiers are behind it," Calamba said.

"But the soldiers we interviewed say that the New People's Army is the one [responsible]. They say the [leftists] were out there killing each other," the CHR commissioner said, referring to the alleged practice of leftist groups of killing some of their own so that the military will be portrayed as the villain.

Government policy?

Enriquez said that if going after leaders and members of groups critical of the administration was not a government policy, President Macapagal-Arroyo should at least issue a statement saying so.

"We've yet to hear anything from her. [The late dictator Ferdinand] Marcos was much better. At least, he didn't have pretensions and admitted that he was a dictator. [Ms Arroyo] is pretending that she is governing in a democracy," Enriquez said.

The alleged assassination of activists happened in the same period that journalists were killed in the provinces, prompting the President to condemn the attacks on media persons and to create a task force to solve their murders.

"When journalists were being killed, she immediately came out with a statement. President Macapagal-Arroyo has yet to issue a statement on the deaths of activists," Enriquez said.

She wondered why Ms Arroyo had not condemned the killings of militant leaders and human rights workers. "Is it because she considers them her enemies?" she said.

On April 17, Bayan and other militant groups staged a rally in Manila to protest the killings. Police dispersed the demonstrators and some of them, including a priest, were hit with truncheons. *(To be continued tomorrow.)*

LIST OF ACTIVIST KILLINGS

NAME	AGE	POSITION	WHEN	WHERE
1. Pablito Ignacio	44	Member, Bayan Muna-Bulacan	Jan. 11, 2005	San Ildefonso, Bulacan
2. Noel Garcia	40	Member, AMC (Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon-Pampanga Chapter	Feb. 1, 2005	Guagua, Pampanga
3. Abe Sungit	44,	Member, Karapatan-Palawan	Feb. 5, 2005	Roxas, Palawan
4. Ronnie Almoete	38	Member, Bayan Muna/Urban Poor sector	Feb. 5, 2005	Cotta, Lucena City
5. Rodrigo Lampa	40	Member, AMC (Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon-Pampanga	Feb. 16, 2005	Barangay Lambac, Guagua, Pampanga
6. Chrispin Amazona	40	Public Relations Officer, UMRAY Calamity Victims Association Inc. (UCVAI); member, Anakpawis-Dingalan, Aurora	Feb. 16, 2005	La Paz, Tarlac
7. Renato Espino	35	Member, AMC (Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon-Pampanga	Feb. 18, 2005	Mexico, Pampanga
8. Rodel Pelayo	30	Local leader, Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA)	Feb. 20, 2005	Balanga, Bataan
9. Joey Abraham	28	Local leader, Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA)	Feb. 20, 2005	Balanga, Bataan
10. Abelardo "Abel" Ladera	45	Councilor-Tarlac City; Member-Bayan Muna; Convenor-Kapitbisig support campaign for the families and victims of Hacienda Luisita Massacre	March 3, 2005	Barangay Paraiso, Tarlac City
11. Romeo "Romy" Sanchez	39	Regional coordinator-Bayan Muna (Ilocos); secretary general, Bayan-Ilocos	March 9, 2005	Baguio City
12. Ernesto Bang		Public Information Officer, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Camarines Norte	March 10, 2005	Barangay Malangkaw, Basud, Labo, Camarines Norte
13. Jose Guiriba		Anakpawis member	March 12, 2005	Barangay Paroros, Donsol, Sorsogon
14. Fr. William Tadena	37	Parish priest and head of the human rights desk of Iglesia Filipina Indpendiente (IF)-Diocese of Tarlac; Member, Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR)	March 13, 2005	La Paz, Tarlac
15. Atty. Felidito Dacut	51	Regional coordinator, Bayan Muna-Eastern Visayas; known human rights lawyer and active member, Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Leyte chapter	March 14, 2005	Tacloban City
16. Joel T. Reyes	33	Member, Anakpawis-Camarines Norte	March 16, 2005	Panganiban, Camarines Norte
17. Henry Flores		Member, Anakpawis	March 16, 2005	Land Transportation Office, Mandaue City, Cebu
18. Victor "Ka Ben" Concepcion		Secretary general, AMC (Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon-Pampanga) coordinator, Anakpawis chapter of Mexico, Pampanga	March 17, 2005	Mexico, Pampanga
19. Edwin Bargamento		Organizer-Negros Federation of Sugar Workers	April 13, 2005	
20. Alfredo Davis	38	Bayan Muna, municipal coordinator	April 15, 2005	Mahaplag, Leyte

SOURCE: KARAPATAN

Corrections

THE PAGE 1 banner story "VIP kin linked to jueteng" yesterday misstated the venue of the award rites for the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng's honorees. The rites were held at the San Carlos Pastoral Complex in Guadalupe, Makati City, not San Carlos City in Pangasinan.

***

THE PRICE per copy of the book "When Chic Hits the Fan" by Kitty Go is P265 at selected National Bookstore branches and not P250 as stated in the Lifestyle section of Friday, April 22.

***

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses: glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent, pending the appointment of a new readers' advocate, to Isagani Yambot, publisher, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address: iyambot@inquirer.com.ph.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 25, 2005
Mark the Evangelist

1st Reading: 1P 5:5-14
Gospel: Mark 16:15-20

Jesus told his disciples, "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; the one who refuses to believe will be condemned. Signs like these will accompany those who have believed: in my Name they will cast out demons and speak new languages; they will pick up snakes and, if they drink anything poisonous, they will be unharmed. They will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed."

So then, after speaking to them, the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and took his place at the right hand of God. The Eleven went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs which accompanied them.

Commentary

Today is the feast of Mark, the scribe of the Spirit, the writer of the first gospel. Mark obeyed the command of Jesus after the resurrection to "go out into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation." Mark wrote words, and traveled with Paul and Barnabas on missionary journeys calling people to conversion and forgiveness, believing that Jesus remained with them in Word, in Bread, in community and in the work that was given to him to share in with Jesus. We, like Mark, are called to share in Jesus' suffering and to know his glory too and it is the Spirit of God who strengthened and confirmed and established Mark. And we have been given this same command and same Spirit. We who know the truth and marvel at his gospel are called to be Good News in our way, in our time, in obedience. Peace to us all—the Peace that Mark served and we are to be in the world.

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Officer touted as next PNP chief gets his 3rd star

THE "CHIEF in waiting" just got his third star.

Oscar Calderon, described by Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao as the "chief PNP in waiting," was promoted to Deputy Director General on April 21, it was announced.

"Of course, I'm very happy," Calderon said on the phone. "But an added star is an added responsibility, and it's a huge responsibility."

A member of Philippine Military Academy Class '73, Calderon is currently chief of the PNP Directorial Staff. His office sees to it that the PNP Transformation Plan, an ambitious six-year program that aims to create a more credible and professional police force, is effectively implemented. He holds the same post that Lomibao held before he became PNP chief.

Not a surprise

Calderon's promotion did not really come as a surprise. His current post calls for an officer with the rank of deputy director general. It was simply a matter of time before he would be promoted.

Calderon is related to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Police Director Lucas Managuelod (ret.), Calderon's former boss at the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management, described him as a "mild mannered officer, soft-spoken and very professional."

When Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco retires in May this year, Calderon is expected to head either the office of Deputy Chief for Administration or Deputy Chief for Operations.

Younger days

Before he was appointed chief of the Directorial Staff, Calderon served as Director of PNP Region IV. Calderon spent most of his younger days in the field, fighting insurgents and secessionist rebels.

He will retire on Oct. 1, 2007, the day he turns 56. *Luige A. del Puerto*

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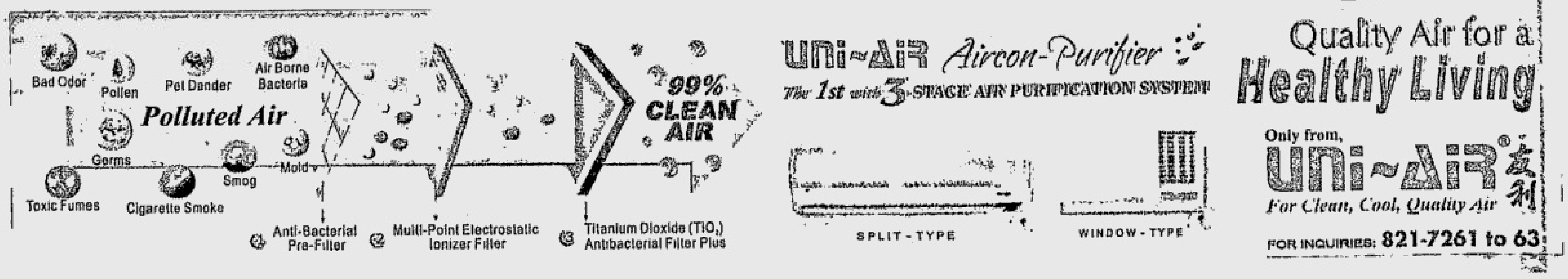

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RP REITERATES PLEA

'Help us bar Pinoys from Iraq'

By Nikko Dizon

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs is set to reiterate to the countries surrounding Iraq the Philippine government's ban on the deployment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to the war-torn nation, a ranking DFA official has said.

"We are looking at all possible means to strengthen the ban. We will reiterate our position to the neighboring countries of Iraq," said Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Jose Brillantes in an interview Friday.

Last week, the Philippines reeled from the news of the consecutive violent deaths of OFWs Rey Torres and Marcelo Salazar Jr., and the attack by armed men on five Filipino workers in Baghdad.

In the latter incident, Francisco Luz and Sherylyn Fontanilla sustained gunshot wounds while their companions, Imelda Talibao, Ginalyn Mejia and Jasmine Valdez were unhurt but badly shaken.

The five OFWs were attacked on April 16 while on their way to the Baghdad International Airport where they were to take a plane home to the Philippines.

Torres was shot and killed by suspected insurgents on April 17 when he stepped out of the US-controlled Camp Victory to buy a ring tone for his cellular phone, the DFA said.

After Torres' death, US military officials informed the Philippine Embassy that Salazar had been killed in an apparent accident while driving a US military vehicle on April 14.

Brillantes said the DFA would send a diplomatic note to the governments of Iraq's neighbors reiterating the Philippines' OFW deployment ban.

Among OFWs' common work destinations surrounding Iraq are Jordan, Kuwait, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Despite these countries' support for the Philippines' deployment ban, however, many Filipino workers still manage to cross their borders into Iraq.

"They (OFWs) are very decided to work in Iraq despite warnings of daily bombings and attacks," Brillantes said.

He said the lure of high salaries, which could be two to three times the average salary of an OFW, "probably erases their fear."

Brillantes, however, stressed, "But they really have to leave."

Brillantes said the DFA would continue to affix "Not Valid for Entry to Iraq" stamps on the passports of OFWs.

Home for OFWs opens

By Leila B. Salaverria

OVERSEAS Filipino workers who need to be in Manila but have no place to stay can take heart.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) has opened the doors to a halfway home built specially for them.

The halfway home, which can accommodate 40 people, is located on the second floor of the Owwa office on F.B. Harrison Street in Pasay City.

Owwa Administrator Marianito Roque said the home offers all of its services—including room, meals, personal hygiene kits, medical services and local transport—for free.

"We would like (the OFWs) to feel Owwa's warmth as well as its genuine concern for their welfare," Roque said in a statement.

OFWs who have no place to stay in Metro Manila are usually those from the provinces who are putting their employment papers in order.

The fees they have to pay for their job applications are usually high enough that they have nothing left for room and board, especially if they have no relatives in Metro Manila.

OFWs from Luzon will be allowed to stay at the halfway home for three days, while those from the Visayas and Mindanao will be allowed to stay for a week.

House parents are on duty at the halfway home 24 hours a day to supervise activities at the center and to facilitate the dispensing of services. Also available are recreation facilities like table games and a television set.

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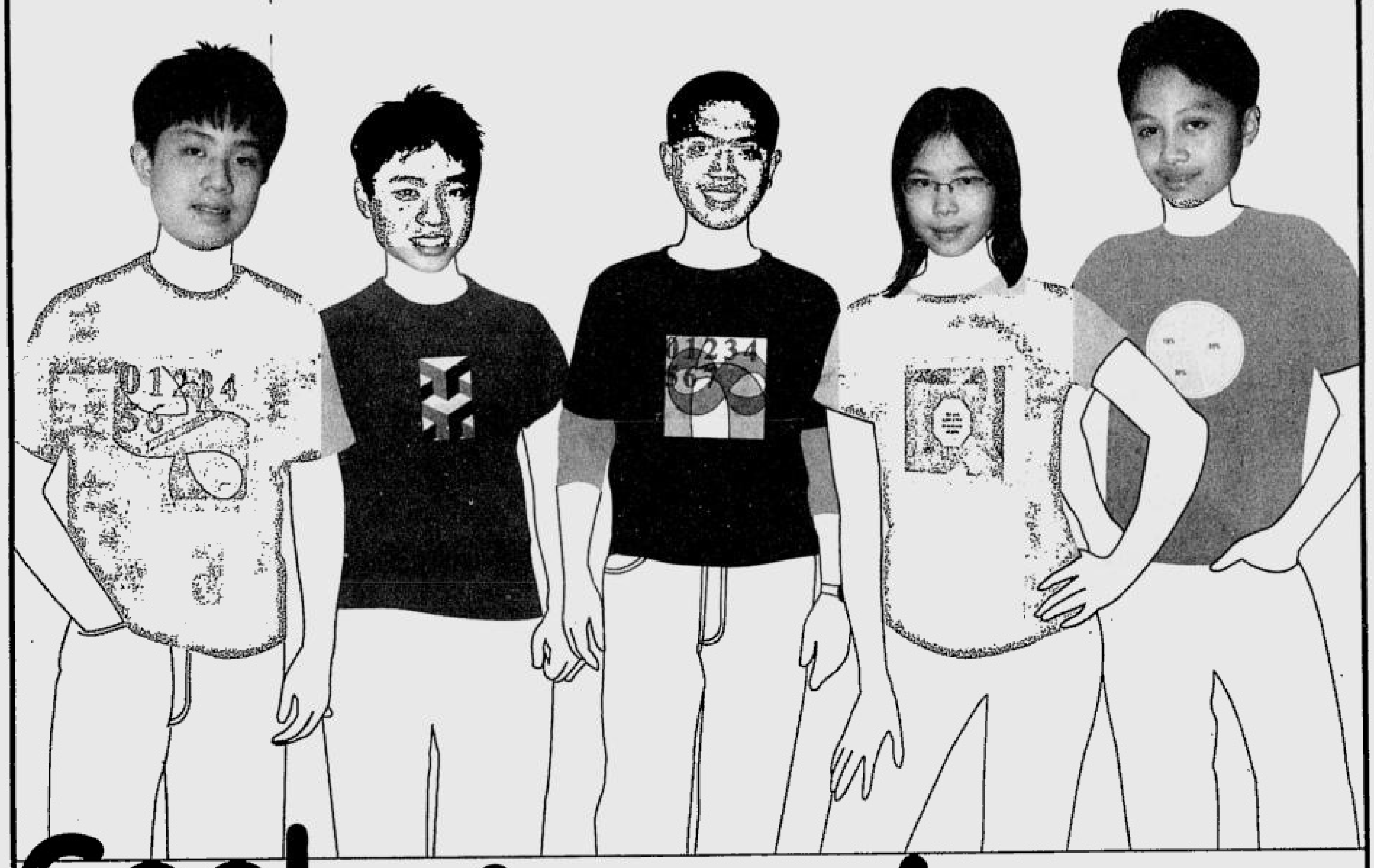

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Adriatico Memorial School
Calapan City – Region IV-B
2nd Place JOE DRIGO V. ENRIQUEZ
Coach: Ms. Alma L. Cagampang
The Peninsula School
Limay, Bataan - Region III
3rd Place SHELDON WALTER V. WONG
Coach: Mrs. Gresilda A. Monforte
Ateneo de Davao University
Davao City - Region - XI

GRADE 6 Team Competition
1st Place AILEEN GISELLE L. CHUA
EARL JOHN R. CHUA
Coach: Ms. Remedios Renegado
Grace Christian High School
Quezon City - NCR
2nd Place BENETTA JOY A. BRANZUELA
DWIGHT GHARDIN T. RAZONABLE
Coach: Mrs. Marites A. Osalvo
St. Paul College of Ilocos Sur
Bantay, Ilocos Sur - Region I
3rd Place JOE DRIGO V. ENRIQUEZ
RAPHAEL R. SANTOS
Coach: Ms. Alma L. Cagampang
The Peninsula School
Limay, Bataan - Region III

4TH YEAR Individual Competition
1st Place SAM CHRISTIAN G. LEE
Coach: Ms. Sanet S. Hipolito
Chiang Kai Shek College
Manila – NCR
2nd Place JON HENRI A. MA
Coach: Mr. Xerwin C. Ceballos
Trinity Christian School
Bacolod City - Region VI
3rd Place ELVIS T. CHUA
Coach: Mr. Samuel G. Gayangos
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City - Region IX

4TH YEAR Team Competition
1st Place SAM CHRISTIAN G. LEE
CHARLES WILLIAM O. ANG
Coach: Ms. Sanet S. Hipolito
Chiang Kai Shek College
Manila - NCR
2nd Place ELVIS T. CHUA
FRANCISCO F. LEE
Coach: Mr. Samuel G. Gayangos
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City - Region IX
3rd Place MARK ALVIN C. BAYAG
PATRICIA MARIE B. AVILA
Coach: Mr. Jose Ariel S. Serrato
Philippine Science High School - Western Visayas
Iloilo City - Region VI

NATIONAL FINALISTS - Individual Competition

GRADE SIX
Region 1
BENETTA JOY A. BRANZUELA
St. Paul College of Ilocos Sur
Bantay, Ilocos Sur
Region 2
JANINE CATHLEEN F. CORPUZ
Miracle Living Christian Academy
Santiago City
Region 3
JOE DRIGO V. ENRIQUEZ
The Peninsula School
Limay, Bataan
Region 4-A
EDRIELLE PAULE J. ENRIQUEZ
St. Bridget College
Batangas City
Region 4-B
RON MICHAEL L. CASTILLO
Adriatico Memorial School
Calapan City
Region 5
NATHANIEL I M. ESPAÑA
Jose Panganiban Elementary School
Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte
Region 6
MARIA KATRINA P. ACUROS
West Visayas State University
Iloilo City
Region 7
CAROLINE D. COLLYER
Larena Central Elementary School
Larena, Siquijor
Region 8
SEDRICK DAVE F. DIRA
Calbayog Pilot Central School
Calbayog City
Region 9
RICCI RYAN G. ROJO
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City
Region 10
RHESA CLARE AMOR A. JANUBAS
Alubijid Central School
Alubijid, Misamis Oriental
Region 11
SHELDON WALTER V. WONG
Ateneo de Davao University
Davao City
Region 12
JANICE P. ANDRES
Dadiangas West Central Elementary School
General Santos City
CARAGA
JESSICA PEARL F. LAMORIN
John Bosco College
Bislig City
CAR
AEBEN T. GAWIDAN
Phases Learning Center
Baguio City
NCR
AILEEN GISELLE L. CHUA
Grace Christian High School
Quezon City

FOURTH YEAR
Region 1
RICARDO MARTIN S. CAMARA
Pangasinan Universal Institute
Dagupan City
Region 2
JULIE ANN M. BANATAO
Cagayan National High School
Tuguegarao City
Region 3
JIM C. MONFORTE
Francisco Homes College
San Jose Del Monte City
Region 4-A
IRIS JILL E. UY
Gumaca National High School
Gumaca, Quezon
Region 4-B
AIREEN D. LAGRANA
Marinduque National High School
Boac, Marinduque
Region 5
ARIANNE JOY A. VIRATA
Aquinas University Science High School
Legaspi City
Region 6
JON HENRI A. MA
Trinity Christian School
Bacolod City
Region 7
FIDELFO C. MORAL, JR.
Mandaue City Science High School
Mandaue City
Region 8
MELVIN S. SARSALE
Paku National High School
Bontoc, Southern Leyte
Region 9
ELVIS T. CHUA
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City
Region 10
POLMYR CAESAR DAVE P. DINGAL
Philippine Science High School - Central Mindanao
Tubod, Lanao del Norte
Region 11
SARAH ROSS Y. LOPEZ
Ateneo de Davao University
Davao City
Region 12
LEAR B. BALDOSTAMON
Dole Philippines School
Polomolok, South Cotabato
CARAGA
McHAROLD D. LANGANLANGAN
Agusan National High School
Butuan City
NCR
SAM CHRISTIAN G. LEE
Chiang Kai Shek College
Manila

NATIONAL FINALISTS - Team Competition

GRADE SIX
Region 1
BENETTA JOY A. BRANZUELA
DWIGHT GHARDIN T. RAZONABLE
St. Paul College of Ilocos Sur
Bantay, Ilocos Sur
Region 2
JOHCEL C. ABELLA
PATRICK LOUIE E. REYES
St. Paul University Philippines
Tuguegarao City
Region 3
JOE DRIGO V. ENRIQUEZ
RAPHAEL R. SANTOS
The Peninsula School
Limay, Bataan
Region 4-A
EDRIELLE PAULE J. ENRIQUEZ
CARMELA E. DEL ESPIRITU SANTO
St. Bridget College
Batangas City
Region 4-B
RON MICHAEL L. CASTILLO
MARC ANDREW B. SEVILLA
Adriatico Memorial School
Calapan City
Region 5
JASPER GERALD R. CUBIAS
KENNETH D. LAGAMAYO
Sorsogon Pilot Elementary School
Sorsogon City
Region 6
LAURENCE RAY P. ARCENO
WINBEL KATE P. ANDRADA
Echelon Development School
Altavas, Aklan
Region 7
GALILEO GENE C. ROBIN
KEZIAH MARIE U. MONTEBON
Silliman University Elementary School
Dumaguete City
Region 8
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SAMUEL CLARK THADEUS V. CASTRO
Naval SPED Center
Naval, Biliran, Leyte
Region 9
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DepEd looking to hire 10,000 teachers who know English

By Alcuin Papa

THE DEPARTMENT of Education announced it would intensify the hiring of teachers but would tightly screen the applicants after finding that many current teachers had flunked an English proficiency test.

DepEed Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad said that beginning with school year 2005-06, all teacher-applicants for the elementary and secondary levels would be required to pass an English proficiency exam before they would be considered for employment.

Abad said the plan was adopted after DepEd officials discovered that most public school teachers failed the English proficiency test recently administered to them.

Earlier, the DepEd announced it would recruit 10,000 new teachers to ease the worsening teacher shortage that has severely contributed to the low quality of education.

Fearing the deterioration of English teaching in the elementary and secondary levels, Abad said the department has had to make adjustments in the hiring of teachers.

"We crafted the new hiring policy to make sure we get good quality teachers and not just those allowed to teach after passing the licensure examination," Abad said.

At a recent press briefing, Education Undersecretary Ramon Bacani said the agency has implemented a strict selection process for teachers.

Bacani said that in the past, the school's selection committees decided on the hiring of teachers. But after DepEd officials saw the poor performance of the mentors, the department decided on the new guidelines in the selection process, which is now handled by division offices.

Review of jailed youths' cases ordered

WITH many minors still languishing in jail, the Department of Justice has ordered a review of the cases of juvenile offenders all over the country.

In a memorandum, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has directed city, provincial and regional prosecutors and district attorneys to gather information on juvenile offenders detained in their respective areas.

Specifically, he said, the prosecutors should "know the nature and status of their cases and the length of their detention."

Gonzalez noted that "minors, as young as 13 years old, have been detained for years, some of whom are facing minor cases such as theft of fish worth P200 but are reportedly required to post P6,000 bail, which is tantamount to denial of bail."

"I need all these data and your recommendations relative to our program creating a more comprehensive juvenile justice system," he said.

In another development, the Supreme Court is looking into the conditions of penitentiaries.

On April 16, Senior Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno and Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna inspected the condition at the Quezon City jail and held a dialogue with inmates regarding the judiciary's role in the penal system.

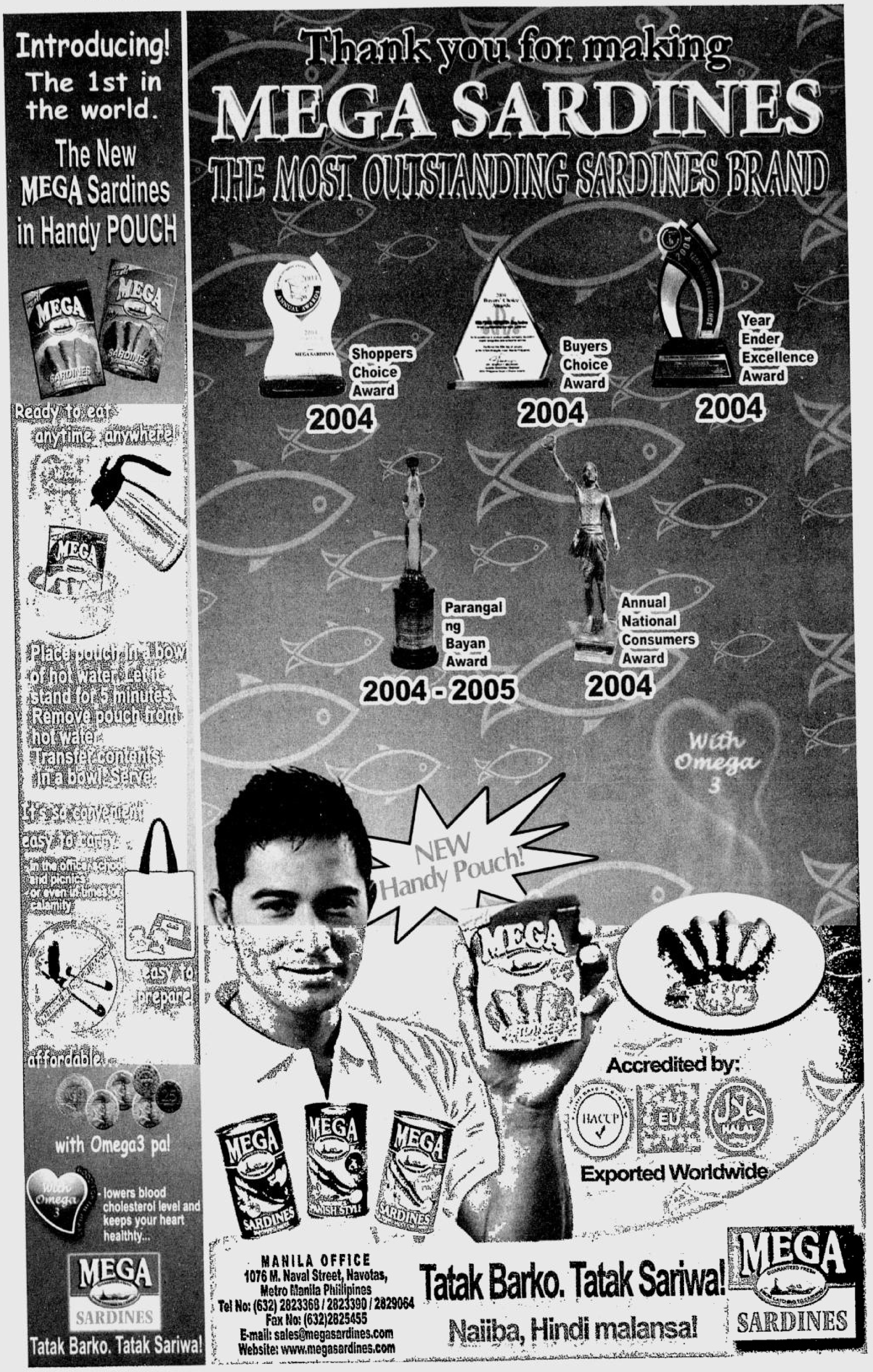
During the visit, the justices launched a program known as the Defender's Notebook and the Simplified Inmates Records System (SIRS).

In a statement, the SC said the Defender's Notebook would be for the use of inmates in organizing and safekeeping important records of their respective cases.

The SIRS, on the other hand, is a software program designed for use by the BJMP Records Office to help it in the construction of databases for the individual cases of inmates.

Both programs are aimed at speeding up the resolution of the inmates' cases for ready reference in court or when their cases are under review.

Puno assured the detainees that "justice may be blind but she has excellent listening devices." *Armand N. Nocum*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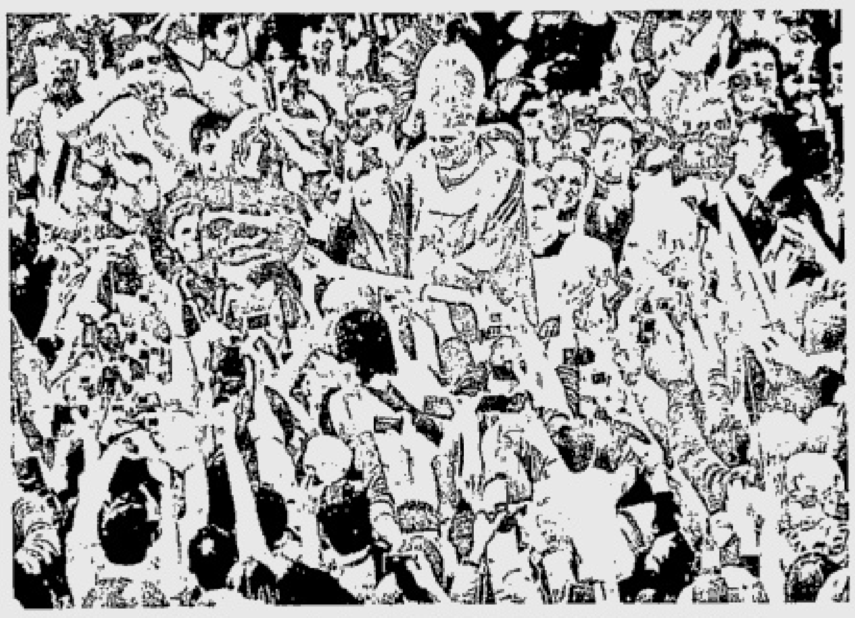
Pope Benedict XVI formally begins Church stewardship



POPE Benedict XVI waves to the crowd as he rides on the popemobile through St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, following his installment Mass. AP

From page A1

The ring is emblazoned with an image of Peter casting his fishing nets and was traditionally used to seal apostolic letters.

The pallium—a narrow shawl of white lamb and sheep's wool embroidered with five silk crosses—symbolizes the Pope's role as a shepherd taking care of his flock. The pallium is pierced by three golden pins to symbolize the nails driven into the cross on which Christ was crucified. The red color of the crosses is for Christ's blood.

Applause

Looking tired and coughing several times, Pope Benedict was interrupted by applause several times during his homily, particularly when he invoked his predecessor, John Paul II. "And now at this moment, weak servant of God that I am, I must assume this enormous task, which truly exceeds all human capacity," he said.

He quoted John Paul in his inaugural homily in 1978, in which the late Pope said: "Do not be afraid!"

In his homily, Benedict made clear he wanted to reach out to other Christians, delivering "special greetings" to them as well as to Jews "to whom we are joined by a great shared spiritual heritage."

"Finally, like a wave gathering force, my thoughts go out to all men and women of today, to believers and non-believers alike," he said.

350,000 at ceremony

In one of his first acts, Benedict had invited Rome's chief rabbi to the installation ceremony. The rabbi, Riccardo di Segni, couldn't attend because of the Passover holiday which began Saturday. Benedict's effort to reach out to the Jews was seen as significant because of his own past: he has acknowledged being a member of Hitler Youth as a teenager and was drafted to serve in the German army.

The Vatican said 350,000 people were in and around St. Peter's Square and civil protection forces said at least another 50,000 were watching the Mass on giant television screens set up nearby. That figure was similar to the number of people who turned out for John Paul's April 8 funeral, although a total of three million people had flocked to Rome in the days surrounding his death and the funeral Mass.

Many people in the crowd Sunday toted banners and flags—including from Benedict's native Germany—even as they kept John Paul in the back of their minds.

"We don't know much about him, but he seems good," said Enrico Protti, an artisan from Asti, near the northern city of Turin, who drove with his wife and two daughters to Rome for the Mass. "If we can, we'll bring a flower also to [the tomb of] John Paul."

Along with an estimated 100,000 pilgrims from Germany, political and ceremonial dignitaries on the list of those attending included German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Prince Albert II of Monaco and Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, the US president's brother and a convert to Roman Catholicism.

Pope Benedict's brother, the Rev. Georg Ratzinger, had a prominent seat on the basilica esplanade.

Queen Sofia of Spain, wearing a white dress and white mantilla, or lace veil, mingled with black-clad dignitaries on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica as they waited for the start of the Mass.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams; Metropolitan Chrisostomos, a top envoy for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the spiritual leader of the world's Christian Orthodox, and a senior representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Kirill, were also on the list of those attending.

Few top Islamic leaders were on hand, and the Jewish presence was complicated by the weeklong Passover holiday.

Tight security

Italian authorities had tight security in place. Boats patrolled the Tiber River, a no-fly zone was imposed within an 8-km radius from the Vatican for most of Sunday, Italian forces had anti-missile systems in place and warplanes on patrol alongside Nato surveillance aircraft. Some 10,000 police were being deployed.

The Ceremony of Investiture was co-celebrated by cardinals, including the senior cardinal deacon, Jorge Medina Estevez, the Chilean who proclaimed Pope Benedict's name to the world from the basilica balcony last Tuesday.

After Pope Benedict was presented with the ring and pallium, Medina Estevez said in Latin: "May the spirit of truth, which precedes from the Father, grant abundant inspiration and discernment to your ministry to confirm brothers in the unity of faith."

Then 12 people—symbolizing Christ's 12 disciples—lined up and pledged obedience to Benedict, kneeling before him and kissing his golden ring. Pope Benedict greeted each one, chatting with each for a few seconds.

The Mass brought Pope Benedict back to the steps of St. Peter's Basilica, where he gave a moving funeral homily for the late Pope that may have helped convince fellow cardinals to chose Joseph Ratzinger as the new pontiff last Tuesday.

In 1978, John Paul walked to the crowds after his installation. But security worries—and memories of the 1981 assassination attempt against the late Pontiff—have placed limits on papal movements. Still, the white open-topped vehicle Pope Benedict rode in was similar to the one which carried John Paul when he was shot, without bulletproof glass windows to protect him.

Even before his official installation, Pope Benedict was framing a papacy meant to dispel his widespread image as the dour guardian of Roman Catholic doctrine, a post he held for 24 years under John Paul.

He has promised to seek greater ties with all Christians and open "sincere dialogue" with other faiths. Already, those pledges and his relaxed manner have softened the rigid reputation. *AP*

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Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

JAPANESE Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (left) and Chinese President Hu Jintao before the start of their meeting in Jakarta April 23. REUTERS

China, Japan mend fences

JAKARTA/TOKYO—The leaders of China and Japan pulled relations between the Asian giants back from the brink at a weekend meeting, but analysts said bitter memories of Japan's wartime history and rivalry for influence will keep ties fragile.

Chinese President Hu Jintao and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi appear to have papered over their countries' worst row in three decades during talks in Jakarta on Saturday, a day after Koizumi made an unusually public apology for Japan's past atrocities in Asia.

"The leaders' summit went well, in that they were able to hold it. They avoided the worst-case scenario," said Kiyoshi Takai, a professor at Hokkaido University in northern Japan.

"But China is saying 'match words with action' and that means the discussions will again return to the Yasukuni issue.

So what Prime Minister Koizumi decides about that is the key," he said, referring to the controversial war cemetery shrine in Tokyo.

Japan's Asahi Shimbun newspaper in an editorial added: "What seems to have happened is that a band-aid was applied to the wound to stop the bleeding. But the injury itself has not been treated at all. The risks are high that the wound will worsen and that it will open up again at some point."

During their one-hour meeting, held at the end of a gathering of Asian and African leaders in Jakarta, Hu told Koizumi that remorse expressed for Japan's wartime past should be translated into action. The Chinese leader said Japan should "never do anything again that would hurt the feelings of the Chinese people."

Hu also urged Japan not to support formal independence for self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing has claimed as its own since their split at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949.

Koizumi used both hands to shake the hand of a stiff and expressionless Hu and told a news conference later that he and Hu agreed to make efforts to develop the bilateral friendship instead of aggravating antagonistic feelings.

Koizumi did not say if he would stop visiting the shrine which has been the source of much of the friction.

"The differences in their standpoints are still quite large," said Zhu Feng, director of the International Security Program at Peking University. "China still wants Japan to take concrete actions, for example to stop the visits to the shrine."

Relations with China chilled markedly after Koizumi took office in 2001 and began annual visits to the shrine. He has not visited this year. *Reuters*

Stoned to death for adultery

FAIZABAD, Afghanistan—An Afghan woman has been stoned to death for adultery, police said on Sunday, the first such incident in Afghanistan since the Taliban's ouster from power.

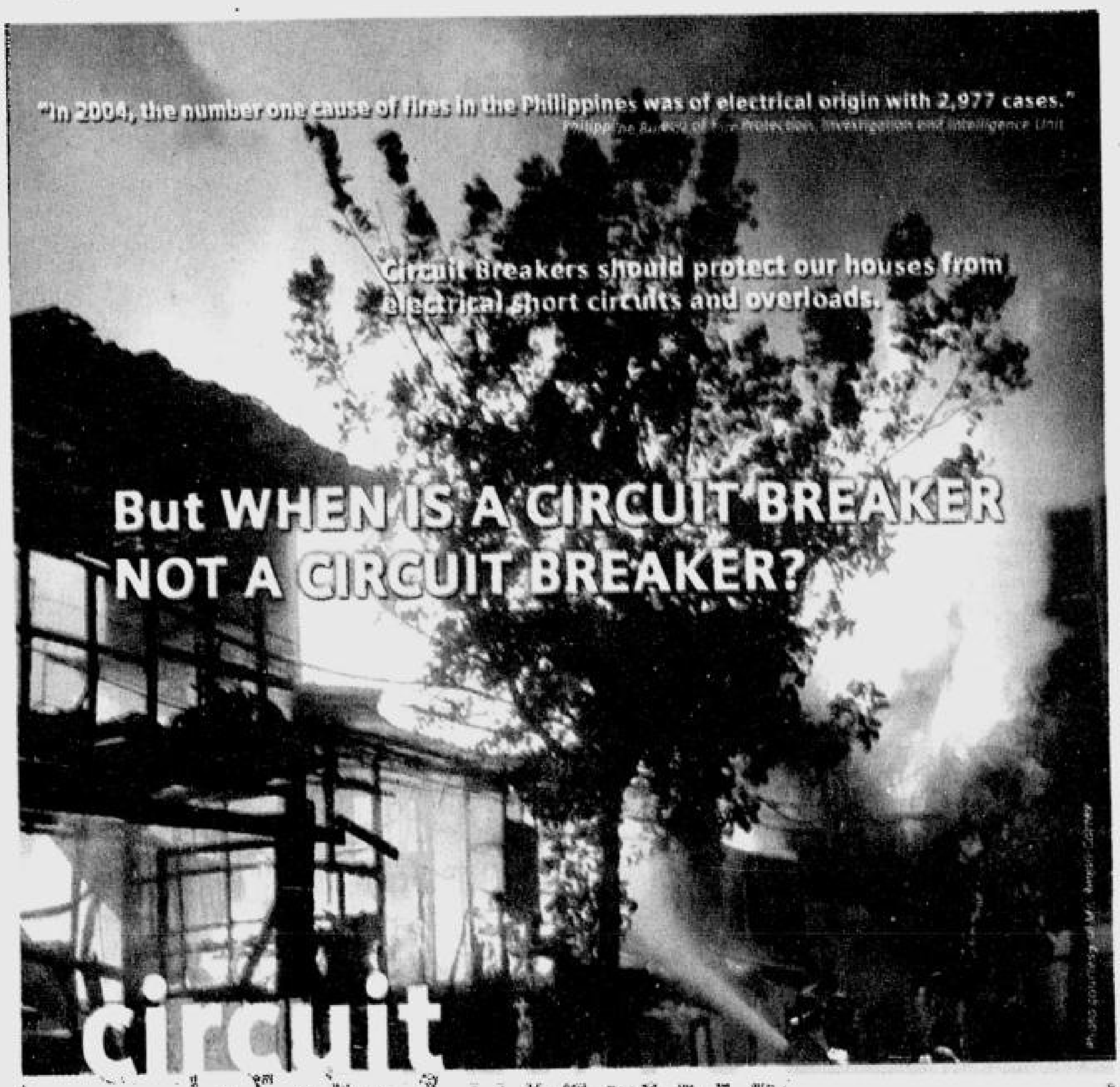
Amina, a 29-year-old married woman, was publicly stoned to death on the basis of a district court's decision on Thursday in Argo district to the west of Faizabad, the provincial capital of Badakhshan, they said.

"She has been stoned to death," provincial police chief, Gen. Shah Jahan Noori, confirmed to Reuters, adding a team has been sent to the area to investigate the incident further.

Adultery is forbidden in the Muslim country and under Islamic sharia law the penalty can range from flogging to stoning to death.

Several women and men were given such punishments in Badakhshan, a remote northeastern province, during the government of the Mujahideen (holy warriors) in the 1990s.

The practice became common during the rule of hardline Taliban who controlled most of Afghanistan till late 2001 when they were ousted from power by US-led forces. *Reuters*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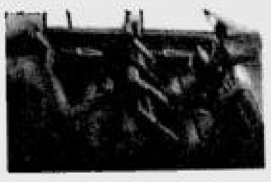

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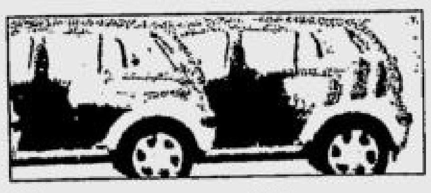

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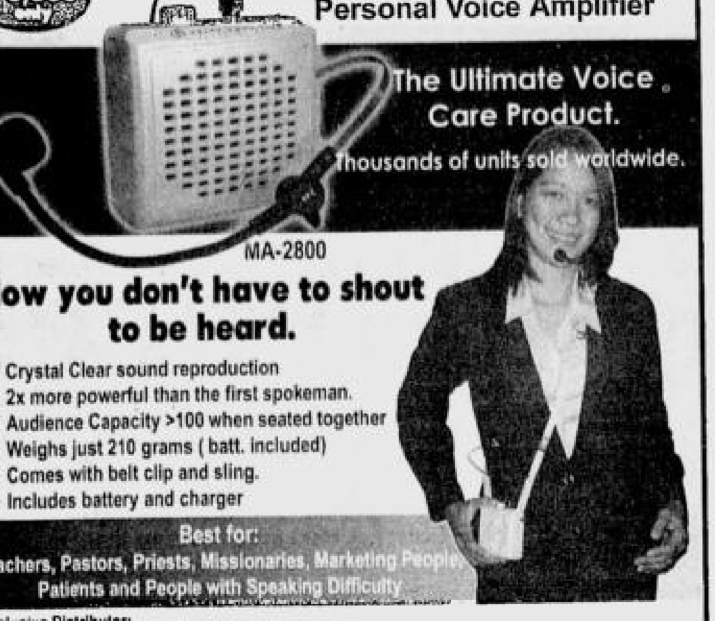

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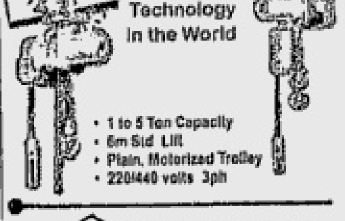

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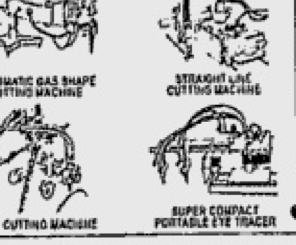
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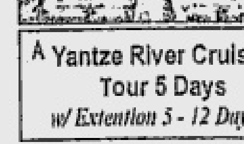

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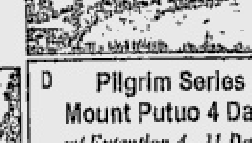

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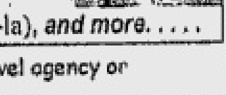

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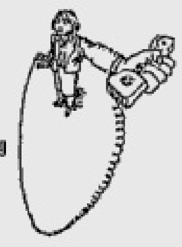

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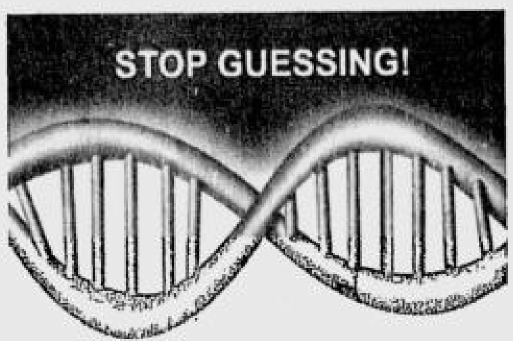

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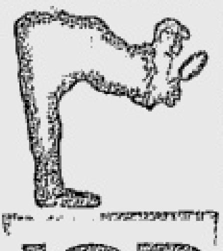

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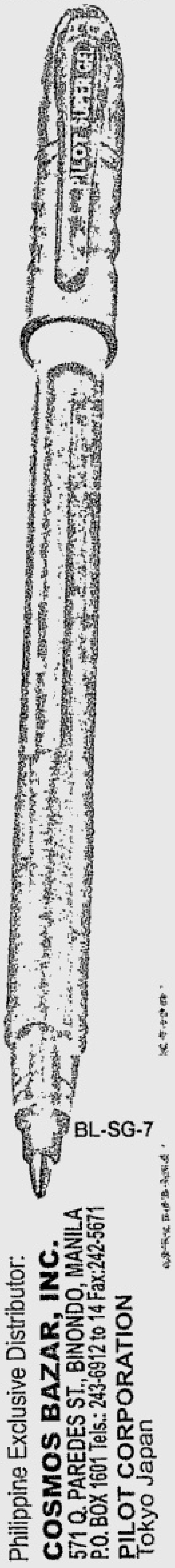

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2 car bomb attacks kill 6 Iraqis

TIKRIT, Iraq—Two suicide bombers detonated powerful car bombs outside an Iraqi police academy Sunday, a day after US President George Bush announced that local security forces now outnumber US troops in Iraq.

At least six people, including four policemen, were killed and 26 others injured in the attack in Tikrit, ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's hometown some 180 km north of Baghdad.

The coordinated bombings took place within 20 minutes of each other outside adjoining buildings housing a police academy and an army liaison office, the latest in a spate of attacks targeting security forces in Iraq.

The local governor imposed a curfew on the town and closed off access.

The first bomber detonated his charge outside the academy at 8:10 a.m. as recruits gathered ahead of a trip to neighboring Jordan for training, police Col. Abdallah Ali told AFP.

A second bomber blew up his car 20 minutes later just a few meters away outside an army office of liaison with US forces, as dozens of survivors and rescuers rushed in to deal with the initial carnage.

In addition to the four killed, police casualties included 18 wounded, said Ali.

A security source said the car bombs were packed with at least one ton of explosives.

There has been a sharp upsurge in attacks in recent days, particularly against security forces, after a relative lull that followed the Jan. 30 elections.

But 12 weeks on Iraqi leaders have yet to form a new government, creating a political vacuum that some fear could play into the hands of insurgents.

Bush on Saturday had hailed what he saw as a new milestone in US efforts to form a viable Iraqi security force, stressing that for the first time since the US-led invasion two years ago, Iraqi troops and police now outnumber US forces.

"Today, more than 150,000 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped, and for the first time, the Iraqi army, police and security forces outnumber US forces in Iraq," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

The Pentagon said the number of "trained and equipped" members of Iraqi security forces now exceeded 155,000, while US troop strength fell below 140,000 this week following the departure of more units.

Forming a viable Iraqi security force capable of defending the country against attacks by insurgents is the central element of a US exit strategy.

US plans call for training and equipping 271,000 members of the Iraqi military and police by the middle of next year.

But the US Government Accountability Office recently said Iraqi security forces remain crippled by poor discipline, questionable loyalties and a rate of absenteeism possibly reaching tens of thousands. It also expressed doubts about the quality of Iraqi recruits.

Iraq's interior ministry spokesperson Sabah Kadim said that as many as 35,000 police who have been trained and put on the police payroll, "aren't working for a variety of reasons." "Of the 135,000, about 100,000 are working," Kadim told AFP, adding that he felt the figure of 135,000 was more accurate than Bush's number.

A senior US defense official acknowledged the capabilities of Iraqi police and other security forces "vary from unit to unit."

But the official noted that between 1,500 and 3,000 soldiers and police were joining up every week and "the trend is clearly positive."

Insurgents on Saturday killed nine Iraqi soldiers in a suicide bombing in Abu Ghraib on the western outskirts of Baghdad, while an Associated Press Television News cameraman was killed while covering a battle in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

"What's amazing to me is that despite all these attacks, we still have no trouble recruiting policemen and soldiers to serve in the ISF (Iraqi security forces)," said US Col. Ed Cardon. *AFP*

CANDLES FOR SLAIN ARMENIANS AFP

Armenians living in Moscow light candles during a memorial commemorating the 90th anniversary of mass killings by Ottoman Turks April 23. Up to 1.5 million Armenians perished in orchestrated killings from 1915 to 1917 as the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor of modern Turkey, was falling apart.

Ousted Ecuador leader gets asylum in Brazil

QUITO—A diplomatic standoff over ex-Ecuadoran leader Lucio Gutierrez inched closer to resolution early Sunday, following word from Brazil the ousted president will be flown out of the country later in the day.

"If everything goes according to plan, former President Gutierrez will arrive in Brazil tomorrow," a Foreign Ministry official told AFP in Brasilia late Saturday. "Brazil is taking all necessary measure to make it possible."

A Brazilian Air Force plane was expected to take off in the next few hours from Porto Velho and head for the Ecuadoran capital to pick up the former president, who has been granted asylum in Brazil following his ouster last Wednesday amid popular unrest.

Officials said the plane had been granted authorization to land, despite requests by Ecuadoran protesters that Gutierrez, who has been holed up at the Brazilian Embassy here since his removal, be handed over to new Ecuadoran authorities.

Ecuadoran Interior Minister Mauricio Gandara said safe passage for Gutierrez "cannot be denied," but specific arrangements will be kept confidential for security reasons.

Gutierrez, meanwhile, told local television he had been removed from office "unconstitutionally and without political trial, and without having committed dereliction of duty.

"I am not a thief. I have not stolen. To the contrary, I was collecting the debts from the thieves," he said by telephone from the Brazilian ambassador's residence in his first statement since being toppled Wednesday by a vote of Ecuador's Congress.

Gutierrez's vice president, Alfredo Palacio, named president by Congress, was still governing without international recognition. The OAS has voted to send a mission here as soon as possible to look into Gutierrez's ouster and withheld its recognition for now.

The United States said it was ready to work with new authorities in Ecuador but also declined to explicitly say it recognized the new government. Quito has not said whether any nation has recognized the change in leadership.

Former Vice President Blasco Penaherrera, sent by Quito to Washington to explain Gutierrez's removal to the OAS, said from the US capital that Ecuador must allow the deposed leader to go into exile in Brazil. *AFP*

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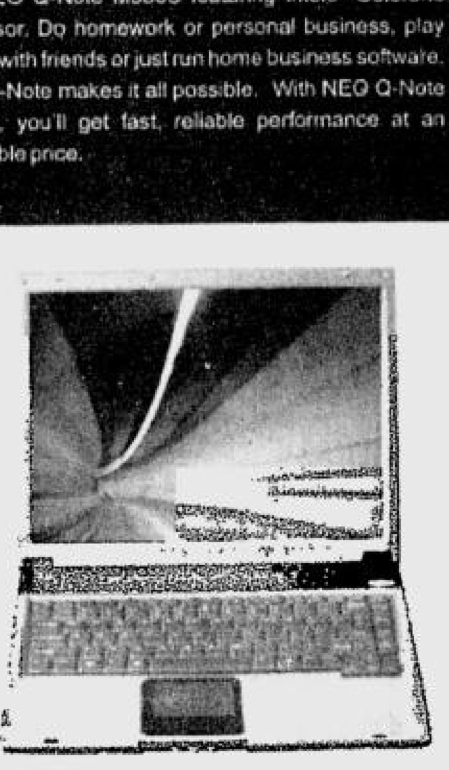

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Asia, Africa revisit past to re-energize alliance

BANDUNG, Indonesia—Asian and African leaders Sunday signed a new strategic alliance to boost trade and tackle poverty, but warned their attempt to revive a historic bond forged half a century ago would falter without firm action.

Under massive security, scores of heads of state gathered in the Indonesian spa city of Bandung for a ceremony to endorse the pact to improve the lives of almost three quarters of the world's people, including many of its poorest.

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and co-host Thabo Mbeki of South Africa were joined by China's Hu Jintao, Junichiro Koizumi of Japan and UN chief Kofi Annan on a symbolic stroll through the sealed-off city center.

The leaders were attempting to recreate a walk in 1955 made by iconic statesmen including China's Zhou Enlai, India's Jawaharlal Nehru and Indonesia's Sukarno as they plotted the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bandung.

But while their modern-day successors hope the new friendship will match the "spirit" of the previous Bandung summit's epochal stand in the Cold War era, analysts say it is unlikely to reap long-term benefits.

At the signing ceremony, Yudhoyono also warned that the alliance of almost 90 countries would falter unless Asian and Africa nations remained united in their commitment to broad pledges of cooperation and mutual support.

"History will judge us on the basis of what we do in the days, months and years ahead—whether we are true to the Bandung spirit, or we fail it through failure of political nerve."

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the two continents must strive to equal the original meeting and the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM, it spawned, describing 1955 as the "high noon of internationalism and idealism."

"Just as the NAM played a central role in the struggle for political emancipation in the past, we need to revitalize this movement to make it a vehicle for rapid social and economic transformation and emancipation in our lives."

The leaders have agreed to meet again in South Africa in 2009, hoping to consolidate the work of a two-day summit in Jakarta by making it a regular fixture.

Observers, however, say although well-meaning, the alliance will miss its goals.

Amitav Acharya, the deputy director of Singapore's Institute for Strategic Studies, said the 2005 meeting may help formulate ways to tackle issues such as HIV/AIDS but the long-term eradication of poverty would be beyond their grasp.

"The Bandung spirit is something of a myth, Bandung was a very successful meeting, it created the Non-Aligned Movement," he told AFP. "But it was a different time, I'm not sure this will have the same impact, the world has moved on."

Sunday's trip down memory lane ending in a minute of silence and ceremony to plant Asian and African trees was almost purely symbolic, lacking the mold-breaking gravitas of the original meeting, said Acharya.

"For many of those attending in 1955, this was their first international summit, but that's not the case now. Almost half the original Bandung members were not part of the United Nations, now almost all are. *AFP*

INDONESIAN couples arrive at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the 1955 Asian-African Conference in the Indonesian town of Bandung in West Java April 24. The event marked the first time the Third World moved to assert itself. REUTERS

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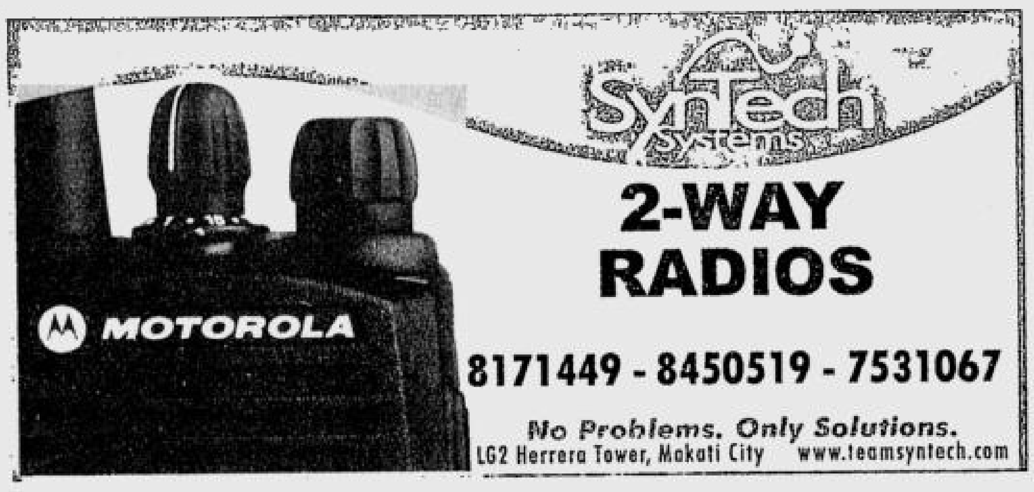

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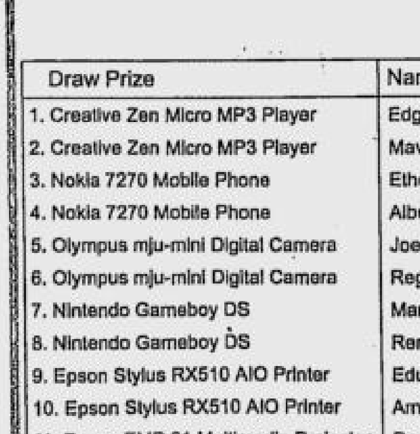

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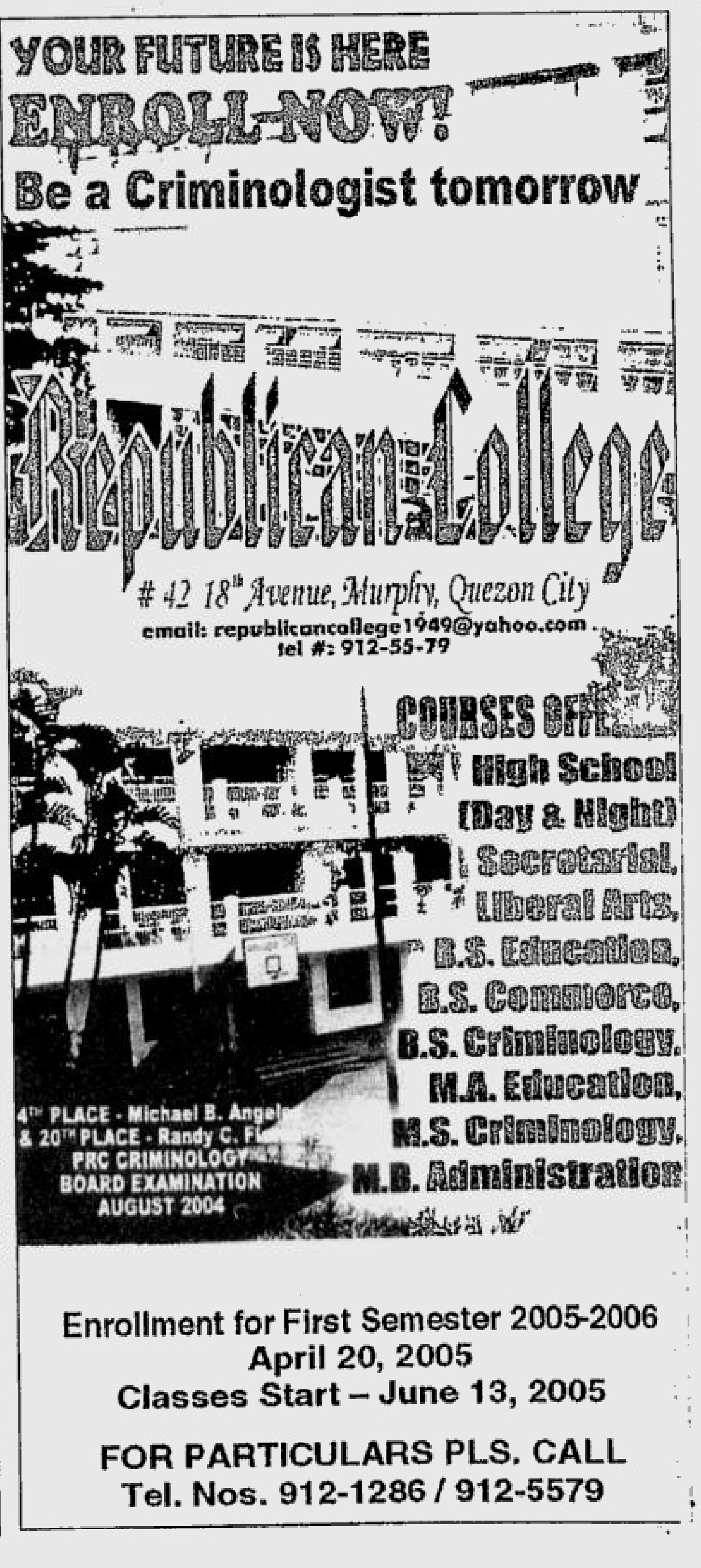

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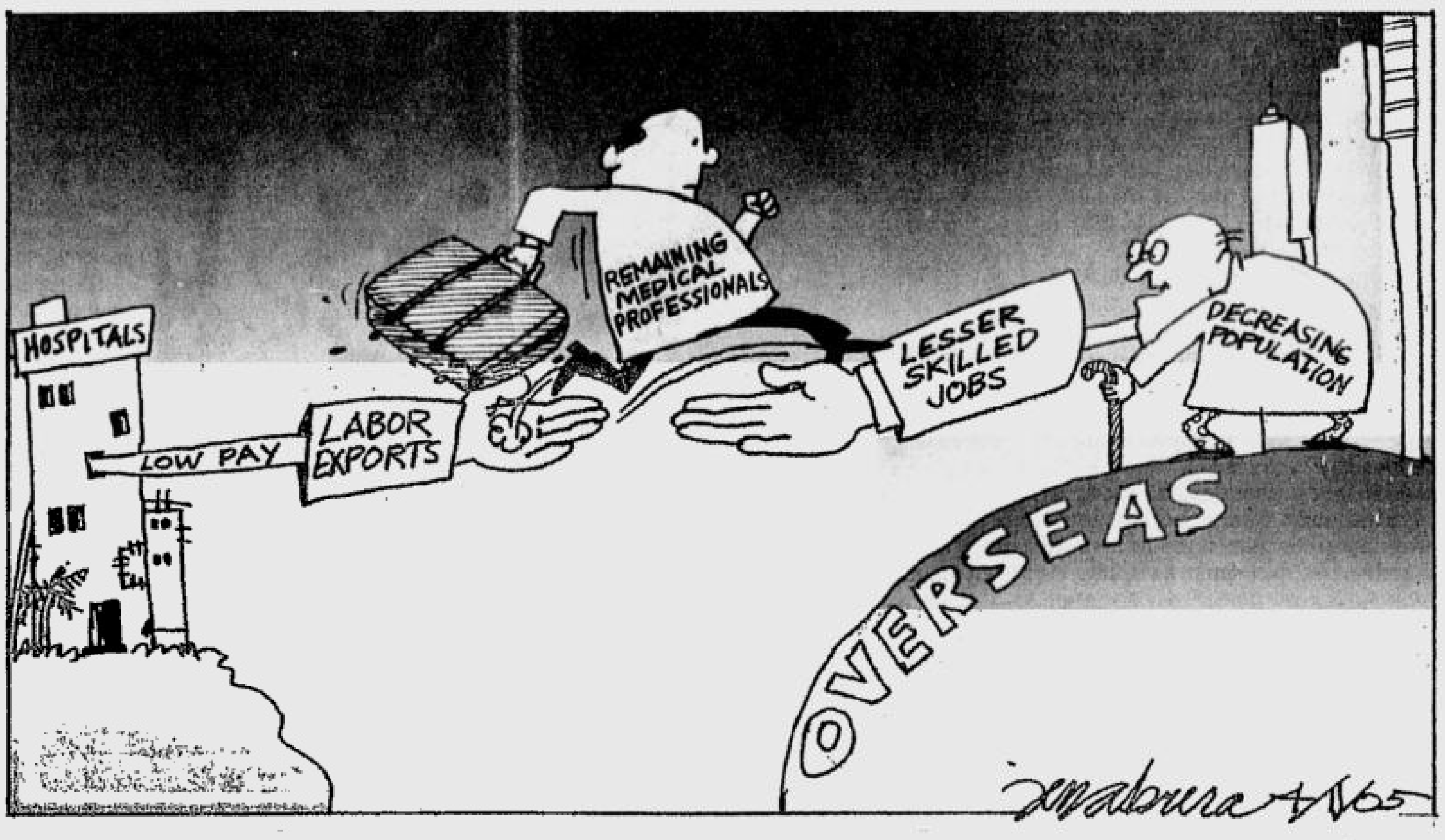

'Jueteng,' again

EDITORIAL

THE POOR you will always have with you, Christ famously told his disciples. Did he foresee, 2,000 years ago, that the biggest Christian nation in Asia would in time formulate a Philippine corollary to his statement? The poor man's game, too, you will always have with you.

Jueteng, the illegal numbers game which caused the downfall of the greatest of all presidential gamblers, is older than the republic. It was already around in Rizal's time, and even then it was already accepted as a benign form of gambling. It was alleged to have been centralized right in Malacañang during Joseph Estrada's presidency, the high point in its history. But according to the police's own estimates, it has only grown bigger since Estrada's ouster.

Today, it is a multibillion-peso, minimum-risk business. There is always a profit, because the operators pay good money for protection. And because the game is rigged.

Bettors believe that winning numbers are chosen through draws. But draws are problematic. They provide easy targets for the seasonal police raid, and run the risk of bankrupting the capitalist. So today, draws are no longer held. Jueteng "lords" simply choose the "right" combination of numbers, and spread the word via a text message.

In other words, the so-called poor man's game is a vice twice over. It encourages the waste of money, scarce as that resource is, and it is based on deceit.

But operators know enough to keep several bettors happy, every day. Like other forms of entertainment, jueteng keeps its audience largely by word of mouth.

Many factors explain why the illegal numbers game continues to flourish.

One potent factor is the government's own confusion about gambling's true nature, and its role in society. It allows some forms of gaming, but bans others. Only the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., for instance, has the legal mandate to operate casinos. In the public mind, however, the distinction between legal and illegal is so much gobbledygook.

"We can launch campaigns but people also resist because jueteng is a form of entertainment," says Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca, who ran and won last year partly on an anti-jueteng platform. "They say, why are the rich allowed to gamble in casinos?"

If the government allows rich people to waste their money in casinos, why should the poor be deprived of the same privilege in jueteng? Crude logic, but in real life there is no mistaking the persuasive power of such an argument.

Another factor is the government's proverbial lack of funds, which allows jueteng operators to integrate the game into the very system that is supposed to stop it. Much of the "integration" takes the shape of grease money: millions of untraceable pesos down the line. But operators know enough to fund legitimate and necessary police operations as well.

"The police can't help you because they will tell you 60 to 80 percent of their operation funds come from the mayors," Padaca told the INQUIRER. "Where do the mayors get it but from jueteng?"

Only the other week, the country's leading anti-jueteng crusader, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, claimed that jueteng had in fact worsened under the Arroyo administration, with more and more public officials "willing recipients and grateful beneficiaries of gambling payolas."

A third factor is the nature of the business, which is not really financial but political. The roll of jueteng lords changes according to who is in power.

According to a ranking police official, this year's "Big 3" collectors "started asserting their presence" only after President Macapagal-Arroyo won last year's presidential election. Their connections may or may not go all the way to Malacañang, but to succeed in this kind of business you only need to benefit from other people's perceptions.

What can be done then? Bishop of Bayombong Ramon Villena thinks all it would take is for the President to flex her political muscle. "Jueteng ceases when the governor orders the provincial [police] director to stop jueteng," Villena said. "Similarly, the entire Philippines will be totally free of jueteng when President Macapagal-Arroyo will be bold enough to categorically say 'No' to jueteng."

That would be a good start. But unfortunately, the problem is more complicated than that. A "No" to jueteng is less categorical when preceded by a "Yes" to casinos and thousands upon thousands of slot machines.

Execs of losing Napocor among highest paid

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHAT can a national identification card do to prevent terrorism? The "harmless" information that will be put there will be provided by the applicant himself. A terrorist will not volunteer information that will betray him. He will create a different identity. In fact, he can create several identities. He can even buy fake IDs at Recto.

Terrorists are not born yesterday. And I don't think the government can verify the information given by them. It will have to take the bearer's word for it. It will be as useless as the present residence certificate in really identifying the holder and his place of residence. In fact, the residence certificate is nothing more but a gimmick to raise money for local government units. (Will the residence certificate be scrapped finally?)

Besides, how can a national ID prevent terrorism when, according to Malacañang, it is only for employees in the executive department? It supposedly will not cover employees of private companies, as well as those of Congress, the judiciary and local government units. In other words, employees of the executive department will have their old ID, driver's license, Comelec ID, passport, etc., replaced with a new ID while all the rest will continue to use old ones. Isn't that confusing? Instead of making transacting business simpler and easier, it will make it more confusing.

The national ID will just be the latest reincarnation of the Spanish-era *cedula* that Andres Bonifacio and his Katipuneros tore up at Balintawak to signal the Philippine Revolution. It can provoke another one. Except that the rebels cannot tear up the plastic ID with their fingers. They will have to use scissors.

The Katipuneros hated the *cedula* because it was an insult to the Indios, a symbol of their servitude to the Spaniards. They had to show it when demanded by the *guardia civil*.

That is why present-day Filipinos are still allergic to a national ID. Soldiers, policemen, security guards, clerks, secretaries can ask just anybody to produce his national ID, and if he or she cannot produce any, he or she can be arrested as a terrorist suspect—as Filipinos, who could not show any ID during the Japanese occupation, were arrested as guerrilla suspects.

But the ID is not an anti-terrorist tool, say Malacañang's defenders. The information that it will carry will be the same information already found in your other IDs. The information will only be put together in one card, they say.

If so, why waste more money to produce another one to replace the others that are serving their purpose satisfactorily? Nobody is complaining, so why change them? The complaint is against being required to get another one. As the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

And why preempt Congress from passing a bill authorizing a national ID system by issuing an executive order? There are already several bills to that effect pending in both houses of Congress. The Supreme Court has already declared as unconstitutional a similar executive order issued by President Fidel Ramos. Why risk being rebuffed again by the Supreme Court? Does President Macapagal-Arroyo already have an assurance from the Supreme Court that it will reverse itself in a new case? After all, it already reversed itself in favor of GMA in the mining issue. But what will that make of the tribunal? Malacañang's rubber stamp? After that, will the people still trust the high court?

Well, GMA may not exactly have a literal assurance, but, remember, she appointed nine of the present 15 justices. That's a majority vote. Besides, the tribunal already bent the law several times to favor GMA—the first time, when it gave its blessings to her illegal takeover of the presidency from President Estrada.

But there was an urgent reason why she had to jump the gun on Congress. She was going to Jakarta for the Asia-Africa Summit. Remember that she had been anointed as the chair of the anti-terrorist campaign in this part of the world. In Jakarta, she had to show what she has done in the anti-terror campaign. She had to be in a position to say, "See, we already have a potent tool against terrorism. Ain't I great?" In other words, the EO was only for "*pasikat*."

* * *

As if the people are not already overburdened by the rising fuel prices, higher water rates, higher court fees and the impending increases in transport fares as well as in the prices of everything else, the Energy Regulatory Board approved another increase in the power rates of the National Power Corp. And not just by 10 or 20 percent, mind you, but by more than 50 percent! If your monthly electric bill now is P200 to P300, it will increase by another P180.

The excuse given by ERB chair Rodolfo Albano is that Napocor has to recover its losses so that it would be a good buy for foreign investors. In other words, Filipino consumers will be made sacrificial lambs for foreign capitalists.

Napocor is losing billions of pesos not because Filipinos are paying for cheap electricity but because it has long been mismanaged. For decades, it has been the milking cow of government favorites. Although Napocor is losing oodles of money, its executives remain among the highest paid in the government. The pay of its top honcho is P500,000 a month, half-a-million pesos. And it is one of the most overstaffed government corporations.

Supposedly to stop its bleeding, it encouraged early retirement but handed out "golden parachutes" to executives who retired under the program. After collecting their retirement pay, the executives are back at Napocor as advisers, still collecting generous pay.

But that doesn't bother Napocor or Malacañang. There are the electric consumers to squeeze more money from.

Old and new

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I ASKED the waitress what the price of *siopao* was, and she replied P13. Alas, my host said, a little embarrassed, even Naga City was not impervious to rising prices. I laughed. The *siopao* was fairly substantial and absolutely tasty. In Naga, a peso still has value and goes a long way to keeping body and soul together.

The restaurant was New China, my favorite greasy spoon in Naga, and one of the reasons I keep coming back to the land of my, well, at least childhood, if not birth. Years ago, one of its competitors tried to bring it down by spreading the rumor that the reason the cats in the neighborhood looked famished was that they had nothing to feed on. The rats had disappeared and found their way into one of the restaurant's most popular offerings.

The same way that, here in Manila, Ma Mon Luk's competition suggested many years ago that the stray cats in Cubao had strayed into its steaming ovens. I don't know if the rumors did anything to reduce both places' business. I do know that the crowd that continued to flock to them afterward was known to say, maybe that was the secret of their *siopao's* incomparable taste.

I still go to New China because it is one of the last vestiges of Naga I can cling to. It pretty much looks the way it did from way back, a bigger space and a second floor proclaiming decent income over the years. Light streams plentifully through it in the morning, but it is cool, the ceiling is reasonably high, an overhead fan is enough to ventilate the place. The building across the street retains its Spanish features, and proudly announces its inception to be 1929. The past streams through along with the morning light.

New China is one of the few things that have survived the onslaught of the fast food whose contribution to progress one may truly debate. I am hard put now to find *kakanin* and traditional Bicol food like *pinangat*, which is grilled young coconut and shrimps or meat wrapped in *gabi* leaves, drenched in coconut milk. The "drenched" is no exaggeration. Two things Bicolanos do not use sparingly in their food: one is coconut milk, the other is chili pepper. You still find *pinangat* now in—where else—fastfood places, or specialty restaurants. Friends in Naga say though the treasure still lies in the deepest recesses of the market, that version, contained in huge cauldrons where you see the *gata* still bubbling when the lid is lifted, being hands down the best. But it materializes only in late afternoon. For unfathomable reasons, it has been pushed back to Naga's culinary hinterlands by the hamburger invasion.

I personally am not a sucker for nostalgia and can't stand for very long radio stations or pubs that resolutely inflict oldies music. I do like to hear oldies music now and then, it does bring back a flood of memories, but I do not like to hear it all the time, I do not wish to drown, arms flailing, in that flood. Things do change, not all of them for the worse, notwithstanding that all of us tend to think our time was the best, everything went on a tailspin afterward. Of course, one may argue exactly that for the 1960s relative to subsequent decades, not just for the difference between cultural renaissance that flowered then and the intellectual barrenness that seeped after, but for the difference between when we were next only to Japan in economic potential and when we are next only to Iraq in murdering journalists. But that is another story.

I'm not a sucker for nostalgia, but I am not a sucker for "modernity" either—in particular where "modernity," as in our case, largely means the spread of commercialism. I still remember how someone in Leyte told me proudly, on the day Jollibee opened in their place, the queue snaked around several blocks, some waking up at crack of dawn to be first in line. I thought of *roscas* and *moron* and *binagol* and the other *kakanin* there, and despaired.

To this day, I still greatly mind the fact that the pulverized shells that teemed on the ground of the plaza at the heart, literally *centro*, of Naga disappeared to make way for concrete cement painted with gaudy colors. The plaza lost its character and became just another blob in another obscure corner of this world. Not all that are built solidly to withstand time and the elements end up being solid or permanent. Some of them end up being fleeting and brittle, at least in human consciousness. The cherry blossom is the most impermanent of things, but I am glad that batty as the Japanese often are, they have not applied themselves to growing strains that increase the life span of those blossoms beyond a week. They revel instead in their fleetingness, and paradoxically fix it permanently in their minds.

I don't know whether, as a people, we do not have a sense of the past because we tear things down, chief of them buildings, with resolute fury with a view to modernizing the neighborhood, thus wiping out physical traces of what went before; or whether we raze things down with resolute fury because we have no sense of the past. It's probably a chicken and egg by now. I still mourn the disappearance of the Jai Alai building. It wasn't the greatest example of architecture, but it had a charm all its own. Elsewhere in the world, restoration is a thriving business; people and governments wanting to preserve even ruins in their pristine, or emaciated, glory. Here, well, I still remember the martial law joke about Imelda being appalled by the decrepit state of the Parthenon and saying, "What a backward people; if we had something like this in the Philippines, we'd have fixed it long ago." I don't know whether that is entirely a joke, or pertains only to Imelda.

But it's good to sip hot chocolate in New China and catch a glimpse of Old Naga.

A miracle for Gina

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

RESIGNED Philippine Coconut Authority administrator Evangeline Valbuena, who had crossed swords with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, found a sympathetic ally in Dr. Vermen Verallo-Rowell, chair of the Makati Medical Center dermatology department and author of two books on coconut. Her "RX: Coconuts! The Perfect Health Nut" will be published in Philadelphia this July. She has made at least 20 "evidence-based" medical studies on coconut oil and other coco derivatives, and based on these, she advocates a "Coconut Lifestyle."

Rowell has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to retain Valbuena "because of her understanding of the need of people in the sciences." She said the former PCA chief readily approved the funding of a study to determine whether coconut oil taken orally converts to antibiotic lauric monoglyceride and can be used worldwide as antiseptic and antibiotic. The funds were to go to specialized blood testing, and Valbuena approved it "with an open-mindedness and willingness to learn." She also heartily endorsed Valbuena's stand on using the coco levy fund for our poor coconut farmers in general, and not just as one "huge slice" to benefit a small sector.

* * *

Unfortunately, Valbuena got caught in a political crossfire and was replaced. But the continuing research into the powerful medical attributes of the coconut should be supported, as it would redound to the alleviation of the plight of our impoverished coconut farmers. This column earlier noted Valbuena's claim that she was eased out because she had opposed the proposal supported by Secretary Yap to use P8.4 billion of coco levy funds to finance the Agusan Reserve Area Development Project (ARADP). This project, which dates back to the Marcos regime, proposes to put up a 110,000-hectare hybrid-coconut breeding station in Agusan del Sur, the labor to be provided by immigrant groups from urban areas.

* * *

Secretary Yap faxed documents stressing that Valbuena was not eased out due to her objection to the ARADP, but due to her poor performance in office. He said the project is still very much in the planning stage, and among the details being mulled is the sourcing of funds—either from an Asean joint project for agriculture or from the coco levy. He stressed that the proposal has not even been submitted to the Cabinet and the President, who has the final say on it. His stand was strongly supported by some coconut NGOs.

* * *

Yap's explanation, however, raises some questions. Evidently, the feasibility studies on the Agusan Valley project were assiduously undertaken last year by then PCA administrator Danilo Coronacion and by coco levy-funded corporations, such as the CIIF and CocoFinance. In fact, a task force was formed for it. By December 2004, however, Valbuena replaced Coronacion and, in no time, she opposed the project. If it was such a big thing, why was Coronacion replaced and made instead a director of the CIIF? Wouldn't it have been better if he remained at the PCA until it took off? Then too, I heard that Valbuena used to work with the President. If she was fired because of poor performance and non-cooperation with farmers' groups, weren't these traits known to the Palace? Why did she suddenly turn suicidal and opposed a project that Yap, who is among GMA's favorite boys in the Cabinet, was very interested in?

* * *

Gina de Venecia, Cecile Alvarez and I were invited by marianologist and TV host Baby Nebrida to a two-hour TV special on the recent twin events in Rome, along with Fr. James B. Reuter, singer and NGO activist Magda Sison Borromeo, and Marian devotee Lynn Manglapus. As Baby planned it, the first hour was to be devoted to John Paul II and the second to new Pope Benedict XVI; but as it turned out, our hangover over JPII's funeral was still pretty bad; there had to be a conscious effort to shift the talk to the new Pope, whom we all agreed is perceived to continue JPII's legacy. Father Reuter opined that Benedict would uphold purity of doctrine even as he reaches out to other faiths.

* * *

At that program Gina de Venecia had a fantastic testimony to make. She had remained in Italy for a week more after GMA's party left for Manila. She wanted to have Gregorian Masses said for her late daughter, KC, who perished in a fire in their home last Dec. 16; she also felt she needed a lot of spiritual healing. Her small group (that included Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman) visited a number of holy shrines in Rome, including the tomb of JPII, and various places in Italy. One of these is the church of San Gregorio Armeno in Naples, where the relics of Sta. Patrizia, a virgin noble lady who lived 1,600 years ago and was known for her great charity toward the poor, are venerated. The nuns from the Crucified Sisters, Adorers of the Eucharist, who take care of the shrine, showed them the dried blood of Sta. Patrizia in a chalice. They learned that it liquifies every Aug. 25, the saint's feast, and that many Church dignitaries come to pray to her, but her blood wouldn't liquify outside of that date. Gina had a prayer to the saint: give her a sign that KC, who turned 17 the day her mother left Manila for Rome, was in heaven and happy. Would she liquify her blood? The nuns led the prayers, and on the fourth Glory Be, it did. The nun holding the chalice began shaking it and the blood was dripping and moving! "*Nangilabot ako*. I never thought I'd see a miracle in my life," said Gina. After touring the convent, she returned to the chalice to touch against it the *stampitas* she had bought. She saw that the saint's blood had dried up again. As she walked out of the convent, Gina smelled smoke and felt her daughter's presence. She felt KC was reassuring her she was all right and it was time to move on. A great peace descended on her.

Tossed by the tempest

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

CONSERVATIVE, moderate, progressive. Labels they all are. And there was a superfluous abundance of those labels as the world watched the death of Pope John Paul II and the rise to the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI.

But labels are not without agenda. Too often, it is our desire to shape persons in our mold that underlies our use of labels. Labels thus become a projection of our desire to have the object of our critique fit into our own agenda.

News, features, columns and commentaries, most especially from American media, were almost one in saying that the late John Paul II was "conservative." Oft cited as basis for this classification was his rejection of the advocacies for women-priests, married clergy, same-sex marriage, artificial contraception and abortion. And because of his "hard-line" position on those issues, he caused the Catholic Church to be "divided."

There is a so-called sin in postmodernist anthropology that is called essentialism. We commit this sin when we classify human events and people under hard-and-fast categories. It is similar to reductionism. It pigeonholes people into those categories, thus denying them the capacity to rise beyond their perceived limits. The common word for it is generalization.

Classifying John Paul II as a conservative easily shows us that labels are poor scales of analysis. Though not the first papal globetrotter (Paul VI also was), the late pontiff debunked the idea of a papacy exercised only from the splendor and gilded corridors of a palatial residence. His foreign trips consistently underscored the Catholic Church's preference for the downtrodden and the poor. At a time when the late Yasser Arafat was almost a pariah to the supposedly more polished West, John Paul was like a voice in the wilderness calling out for a Palestine for the Palestinians.

The late pontiff was the first in the modern age to de-Italianize the Vatican curia, something that was utterly unimaginable before his time. The election of another non-Italian Pope following his papacy is a phenomenon that should not be missed out on John Paul, a Pole. He also internationalized the apostolic nunciatures. One papabile, Ivan Cardinal Dias, the archbishop of Mumbai, India, was a papal nuncio to South Korea, Benin and several other countries.

John Paul was hardly a conservative when it came to the youth. For sure, his "World Youth Day" meetings will now be a Vatican institution. I saw John Paul in the 1995 World Youth Day in Manila, doubtless a mammoth event. Despite being the old man that he already was then, he addressed the youth in banters, even as he gamely swayed his cane to the beat of music, and used the drama of stage lights to emphasize his message. How many young people all over the world have remained in fidelity to the Church because of the World Youth Day, a modernist device of evangelism, hardly the stuff of which conservatism is made?

Those with the bad habit of labeling Church officials as conservative are the same voices who come from the regions of the world where the pews are empty, save for a few geriatric members of their populations. John Paul once said that Jesus Christ has disappeared from Europe. The greatest paradox of modern times is the decline of the West. Once the principal source of Catholic missionaries, it is back to square one—as a mission territory. That alone should be a lesson for those who resonate with the so-called progressive issues.

On the other hand, Africa, which was close to the pastoral heart of John Paul, is now a bastion of Catholicism. The African nation with the third largest Catholic population in the continent, Uganda, is currently setting the example of abstinence and a change in moral behavior—not condoms—as the solution to the AIDS problem.

The election of Benedict XVI was greeted by those people with the same method of analysis they used in labeling John Paul. But where, I ask, is the wisdom of labeling the new Pope as a conservative? Is a pope who extols the richness of Vatican II a conservative? Is it religious rightist extremism when a pope says he will spare no effort to arrive at dialogues with various cultures, and then calls for a world order of authentic social development for man, in pursuit of the true and the good for human dignity?

When a new pope vows to pursue interaction with local churches, following it with the key ideas of collegiality and devolution of power, does this show the stuff conservatives are made of?

When the boat is tossed by the tempest, will the one at the helm not repel the onslaught of the waves as they lash and thrash the boat, or will he not instead bring the boat to its safe destination, especially when that destination, as Benedict XVI announced, is a Church that is "courageous, free and young"?

Secularism has brought us into the world of shallow labels and essentialist thoughts which cannot fathom the great wisdom that the Church has handed down through generations as a legacy.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

A re-interment

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

ON THURSDAY, April 28, a Mass will be held in Santo Domingo Church at 10 a.m., prior to the re-interment of Mrs. Aurora Aragon Quezon's remains in the Quezon Memorial Shrine, next to the tomb of her husband. By means of this column, our family invites all our relatives, particularly from the Molina and Aragon clans, to join us. And for those who knew or were associated with Mrs. Quezon, we hope you will be able to join us as well. The National Historical Institute and many other government agencies have worked long and hard to finally make it possible for Mrs. Quezon to rest in peace near the tomb of her beloved husband.

She is being re-interred on April 28 because it is her death anniversary. In college, a professor once took me aside after class, and asked how I was related to Doña Aurora. I said, she was my grandmother. "I see," he replied, "you know, I was one of the many UP students who volunteered to join the manhunt for her killers in 1949."

The killing and manhunt the professor referred to are summarized by one American historian: "The Huk campaign that began in November 1948 reached its peak in April 1949, with the ambush of [Mrs.] Aurora Quezon, widow of the former Philippine president. Commander Alexander Viernes, alias Stalin, took two hundred men and laid an ambush along a small country road in the Sierra Madre mountains and waited for a motorcade carrying [Mrs.] Quezon, her daughter, and several government officials. When the ambush ended, [Mrs.] Quezon, her daughter, the mayor of Quezon City, and numerous government troops lay dead alongside the road. Although Viernes claimed a great victory, people throughout the islands, including many in Central Luzon, were outraged. Viernes misjudged his target's popularity. President Quezon left a strong nationalistic sentiment after his death… and his widow represented the spirit of Philippine nationalism and resistance. Feeling the swell of popular indignation about the death of a national hero's wife and family, Taruc denied responsibility and said that the ambush was conducted without HMB approval. Despite his attempts to disclaim the actions of Commander Viernes, Taruc lost a great deal of popular support and confidence over the incident, confidence he never fully regained and support that he would need later, but would not find forthcoming."

Time Magazine, in 1946, said that "thousands of Filipinos regard her as a combination queen-mother and patron saint." I know that even people who hated President Quezon liked his wife. Aurora Aragon Quezon was born on Feb. 19, 1888 to Pedro Aragon and Zeneida Molina, in Baler (then in Tayabas Province). During the Philippine Revolution, her father was imprisoned in Fort Santiago by the Spaniards as a suspected member of the Katipunan, while young Aurora and her sisters were ironically kept in the Spanish garrison during the famous Siege of Baler.

In 1911, Aurora went to Manila to study in the Philippine Normal College but had to stop her studies due to her poor health. In December, 1918, she married her first cousin Manuel Luis Quezon. During her husband's political life, Aurora Quezon stayed in the background, involving herself with women's organizations such as the National Federation of Women's Clubs, of which she was honorary chairman. She was very active in the campaign to give Filipino women the right of suffrage, which succeeded in 1937. During her husband's term, she was particularly involved in managing their farm, Kaleidan, in Arayat, Pampanga, to demonstrate how social justice could be applied to landlord-tenant relationships in an agrarian setting. She accompanied her husband into exile. When her husband died of tuberculosis on Aug. 1, 1944, Mrs. Quezon moved to California, where she and her daughters volunteered to serve as nurses in the Red Cross while awaiting their return to the Philippines.

When Mrs. Quezon returned to the Philippines in 1945, she was offered a slot in the Liberal Party's Senate slate for the May 1945 elections, but she declined. She, however, campaigned actively for Manuel Roxas who became the first president of the independent Philippine Republic. In 1946, Congress voted to give her a monthly pension of P1,000. She declined it: "I feel that on account of … countless war widows and orphans … I should waive collection of a pension …" her letter stated, "I cannot, in good conscience, receive … [g]overnment assistance when so many of my less fortunate sisters and their children are not yet taken care of … I know [if I accepted] I would not be keeping faith with the memory of my beloved husband…."

In 1947, the Philippine National Red Cross was established as an independent Red Cross organization, and she became its first chairperson. (She held the position until her death in 1949.) She also continued to involve herself in civic work, such as the efforts to rebuild the Antipolo Church. She was the first First Lady to reside in Malacañang, but she spent as little time as possible there, preferring to stay in a *nipa* house in Malacañang Park or in her farm in Arayat. She received honorary doctorates from the University of Santo Tomas, and from Maryhill University in the United States. She received the Ozanam Award from the Ateneo de Manila University, and the Pro Ecclessia et Pontifice Cross from Pope Pius XII.

Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City was named in her honor in 1951, and in the same year, Aurora sub-province, comprising Baler and surrounding areas was established. In 1978, Aurora became a separate province. The Concerned Women of the Philippines has named the Aurora Aragon Quezon Peace Awards after Mrs. Quezon to remind people of the fact that in times of violence, the first to suffer are the innocent.

The politics of dying

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HONOLULU—The recent death of John Paul II obliterated from the headlines the bizarre case of Terri Schiavo. It's hard to recall any case in recent American history that has aroused as much political passion, especially in the nation's capital. Was it a case of the "right to die" or the "right to live"?

Dying the American way, it seems, is no longer a "natural" event but a "right" to either prolong your life by artificial means or be allowed to die with dignity, to put an end to your and your family's agony. These fundamental right-to-live or right-to-die issues will continue to be debated beyond the riveting Schiavo case. No less than US President George W. Bush jumped into the acrimonious debate after a Republican-controlled Congress tried to intervene, when the case was thrown into the jurisdiction of the federal courts. A public opinion poll showed that fully two-thirds of the respondents said it was wrong for Congress to intervene, and that Washington's stance was "more rooted in politics than principles." And 70 percent disapproved of President Bush's role in "the drama."

What had started as a personal feud between Terri Schiavo's husband (who wanted Terri's feeding tube removed) and her parents (who wanted the tube to be reinserted), exploded into a media circus with just about every constituency weighing in with one argument after another. The case dates back to 1990 when Terri suffered brain damage and lapsed into a vegetative state. Twelve years later, and following a series of suits and countersuits, a judge ruled that there was no substantial evidence that Terri's condition would improve.

In October 2003, the case started getting to be politicized with Gov. Jeb Bush filing a brief supporting Terri's parents in a federal lawsuit. The state legislature passed "Terri's Law" to allow Governor Bush to order that Terri's feeding tube, which had been disconnected, be reinserted. Here, the president publicly praised his brother. Meanwhile, Terri's husband Michael Schiavo filed a suit saying that Terri's Law was unconstitutional. It became an endless legal tangle—with a "living dead" woman at the center of it all.

In 2004, a Florida state judge ruled that indeed, Terri's Law was unconstitutional. The Florida Supreme Court upheld this ruling, but Terri's tough-as-nails parents would not be deterred. They hated their son-in-law Michael with a passion, accusing him of adultery and misusing a malpractice money settlement he had won for Terri. By January 2005, the determined parents had gone all the way to the US Supreme Court, which, in turn, refused to hear their appeal. This should have been the end of it, as there was no way to send a legal brief to God, right?

Wrong. Several religious or pro-life groups of varying persuasions decided they could be the final arbiter. The "Right to Live" slogan became their battle cry. They picketed and protested in the hospice where Terri was, holding signs like "You Shall Not Murder!" Coming from mostly Texas-based Christian conservative groups, they excoriated the judges accusing them of posturing as "the supreme political power" in the country. The poor woman had a "right to live," they screamed, why are people so in a hurry to end her life? A number of conservative congressmen rushed legislation on various "end-of-life" issues. A senator from the South introduced legislation that would bar the removal of a feeding tube from a patient unless he or she had a living will saying otherwise. Any attempt to end medical treatment even if a case were hopeless would be tantamount to murder or assisted-suicide.

Veteran TV journalist Jack Cafferty just brushed off the entire issue with, "It's all about politics. It has nothing to do with Terri Schiavo. This is all about the abortion debate and the right to life and the right wing of the Republican Party." Adding a bit of sarcasm to his comments, Cafferty continued, "And it's all cloaked in some, you know, mantra that says, 'Oh, we're worried about this woman's life.' Baloney!"

Actually this Schiavo case was not the first of its kind in recent memory. The other case involved another young woman, Karen Ann Quinlan, 22, who lapsed into a coma on April 15, 1975, apparently as a result of consuming alcohol and drugs. She deteriorated into a permanent vegetative state and her father was appointed by the court as her guardian, who had requested that Karen's respirator be removed. The New Jersey Supreme Court granted Mr. Quinlan's request. Her doctors "weaned" her from the respirator in 1976, but surprisingly she continued to breathe on her own. Her father did not want artificial feeding and hydration stopped, even though the Supreme Court allowed that all life support be withdrawn. Amazingly, Karen lived another 10 years. The "battle cry" then was "the right to die."

In its consideration of this case, the New Jersey Supreme Court advocated giving decision-making authority to a "hospital ethics committee," which didn't exist in the mid-'70s. Consequently, these committees grew in number but debates soon arose as to the scope of these committees' "authority." Since then, this "decision-making authority" was ruled to belong to "patients, surrogates and care providers."

The point of this commentary is, how do you wish to die? It is a morbid thought, something that we Filipinos would rather not think about. We will probably attribute it to "the will of God." Both the Quinlan and Schiavo cases are probably extreme examples. But they can and do happen, now with modern technology. After the Schiavo case, there was a flurry on making or revising living wills.

How would it feel if you were confronted with this situation? You can't live anymore the way you want to, but you are not allowed to die either? What a predicament, especially if you no longer have the ability to make that choice.

In the end, the politics of dying may be much more complex and difficult than either the sociology or economics of dying.

Belinda A. Aquino is professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she is also director of the Center for Philippine Studies.

THEY SAID

Bygones

"Government will still be needed as a regulator, and to provide the policy environment. As a regulator, it will have to balance the concerns of the consumer with the legitimate concerns of the investors. But gone are the days when government had to own the assets in order to deliver the goods."

—Newly appointed Energy Secretary Rafael Lotilla

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Osmeña as president?

MAY I please point out a glaring error in the April 13 editorial ("Losing gracefully") of the INQUIRER. It mentioned something about the plan of President Carlos P. Garcia to proclaim his candidate for vice president, Sergio Osmeña Jr,. as acting president until Garcia's protest could be resolved.

The editorial went on to say that Osmeña Jr. turned down the proposal even if it offered him a chance to become president even if only for a year. Osmeña could not have refused the offer because, in the first place, he was not Garcia's running mate. It was Gil Puyat.

I checked with lawyer Edilberto Gallares who served as executive secretary during the last few months of the Garcia presidency. He, too, is not aware of such a plan.

Of course, I am a subscriber (from a local outlet) of the INQUIRER.

—JOSE MA. ROCHA,
109 CPG East Ave.,
Mansasa Heights,
Tagbilaran City

THERE is an account about the plan in Lew Gleek's "The Third Philippine Republic." The "acting presidency" was offered to Osmeña, who ran for vice president as an independent, because he was viewed to have done better than Gil Puyat, Garcia's running mate under the Nacionalista Party banner. Based on other written accounts, it appears that the plan was not a well-kept secret even at that time. And if we may point out, the editorial did not refer to Osmeña as Garcia's running mate.—Ed.

Gov't must set example in reducing energy costs

THE GOVERNMENT is thinking of measures to save on the country's energy cost, but it is not really showing its citizens the way.

For example, street lights on national roads and local streets are left on day and night; government vehicles are used even for family errands; and daylight savings time has not been adopted, notwithstanding the fact that our country is blessed with so much sunlight and daylight. Indeed, how come the government is not keen in using this natural source to cut back on our energy expenses?

The proposal to reduce the store hours of malls and groceries is not practical. Entrepreneurs renting mall spaces depend on much needed sales to sustain their operations and keep them profitable. Limiting the business hours will mean laying off personnel due to lower sales. Besides, government has no business telling private enterprises how to run their operations.

Instead of limited store hours, we need groceries that operate from 9 p.m. to, maybe, 3 a.m. or 4 a.m., just like in other countries, to cater to the those who work at night and need to do their shopping late in the evening or early in the morning. With the option to shop late at night, one can avoid the usual day crowd and even help ease traffic in the vicinity of supermarkets.

Another way of saving energy is by getting rid of government cars with engine displacements of over 2 liters. There is no need for public officials to use Expeditions or cars with 8-cylinder engines, unless they just want to bloat their egos.

The need to save energy must be inculcated in the public mind by a sustained government campaign, which should continue even when there is no energy crisis.

—MIKE JOSE,
donmiguel@spymac.com

Give patients the choice of medicines

WHILE I wholeheartedly agree with Lualhati Capistrano on the appallingly high prices of branded drugs (Letters, PDI, 4/11/05), I think there were some glaring irregularities in her understanding of drugs and a free market economy.

For one thing, you cannot substitute a powerful antibiotic like the one found in Ztromax with generic amoxicillin, especially since the rampant misuse of antibiotics in the Philippines has led to many powerful "super-bugs" that are already immune to the inferior antibiotics.

Also, the laws of a free market dictate that the government should not regulate the price of branded goods. And the Philippines is a tiny market for these multinational drug companies; they will never go bankrupt just because of the Philippines.

But what the government can do and, in fact, already does, is import the cheaper, "generic" versions of medicines.

Therefore, the most important thing is for the government to strictly enforce the law that requires all doctors to write the generic name of drugs in their prescriptions. Doctors who do not do this and instead fool the consumers into buying the branded counterparts should be barred from practicing medicine. And the consumers should finally be smart and start buying the generic equivalents.

—MICHAEL RASHKAE,
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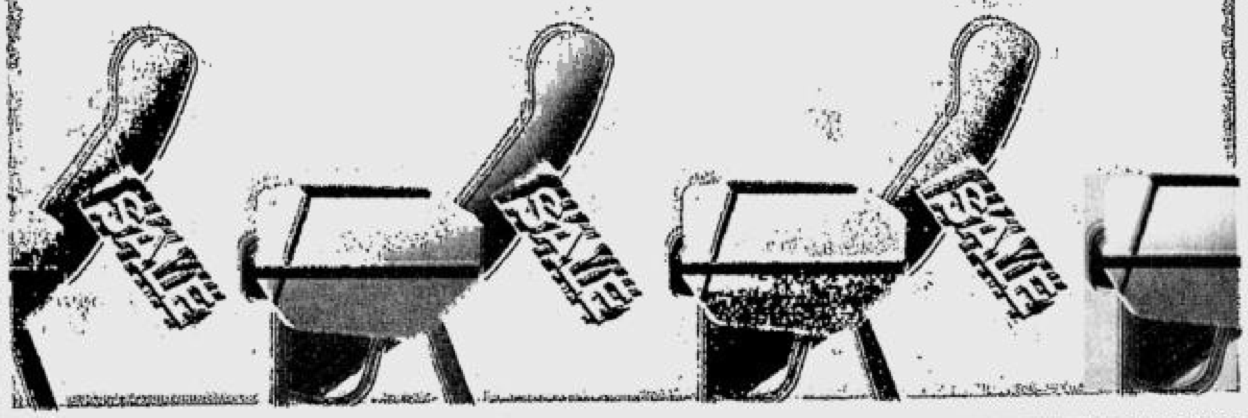

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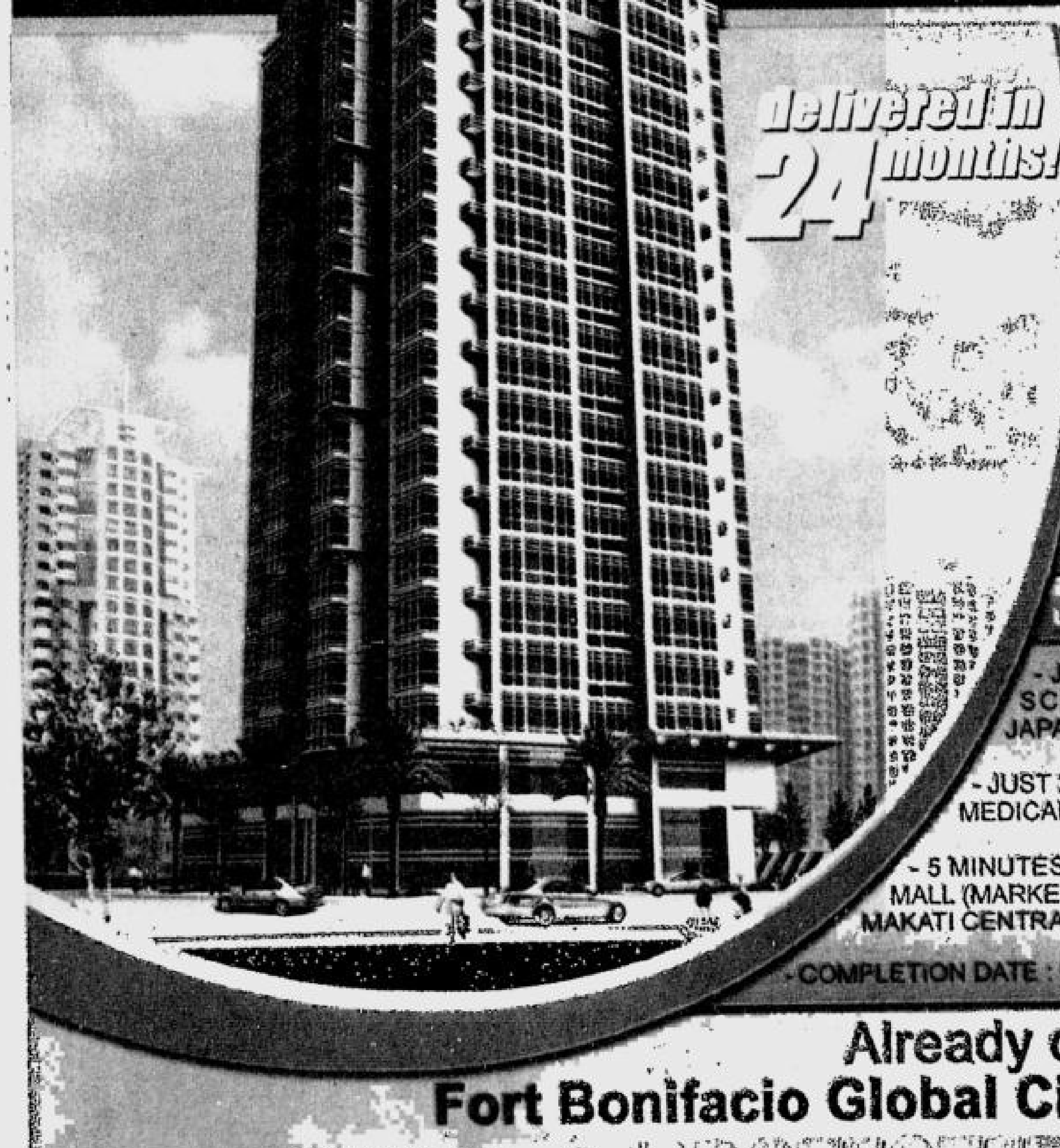

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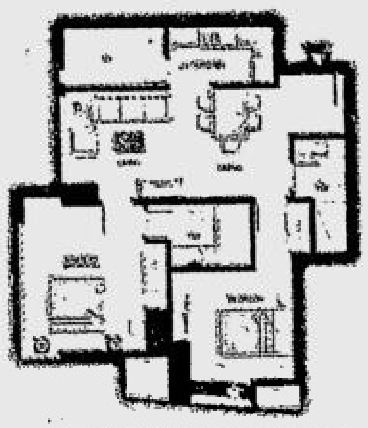

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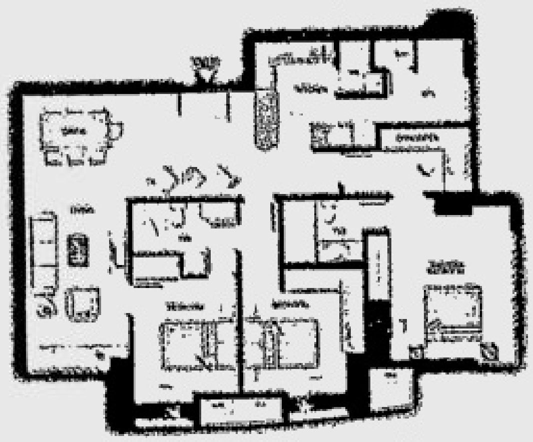

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6 NPA rebels, 2 cops slain in Bulacan

SAN RAFAEL, Bulacan—Six suspected New People's Army rebels and two policemen were killed in a separate encounter and police checkpoint attack in two towns in Bulacan yesterday, reports from the police and the military said.

In San Miguel town, reports from the Army's 7th Infantry Division said at least six rebels were killed during a clash with government troops in Barangay Bulaong. The encounter broke out at 5:30 a.m. and ended past 10 a.m.

The slain rebels, who have yet to be identified, belonged to a 40-member unit led by Mamerto Trinidad, also known as Ka Meo, of the NPA front "Eastern," said 2nd Lt. Oliver Ikid, a company commander of the 56th Infantry Battalion.

The NPA has yet to confirm the death toll.

Soldiers recovered an M-16 rifle, a handheld radio, food and backpacks in the encounter site.

According to soldiers, villagers gave them information on the NPA presence.

In San Rafael town, two policemen were killed and two others were wounded when suspected NPA rebels strafed a police checkpoint in Barangay Sampaloc at about 10 a.m. Sunday.

Police believed the rebels strafed the checkpoint in retaliation following reports that six NPA rebels were killed in San Miguel, about 30 km from this town.

Reports said SPO3 Amante Puma and SPO2 Benito Deticio were killed as at least six suspected NPA rebels aboard a jeepney strafed the checkpoint they were manning. Their companions—PO2 Jericho Redon and PO3 Juan Cunanan—were wounded and taken to the Baliuag District Hospital in Baliuag town.

Police reports said the victims, members of the 306th provincial police mobile group, were on alert because of the military operations against the NPA in San Miguel.

Reports said the rebels who attacked the checkpoint were wearing blue police camouflage uniforms. Police recovered empty shells of .45 cal. pistol and M-14 and M-16 rifles near the checkpoint.

Arrested

In Calbayog City, Samar, two suspected NPA members were arrested during an early morning raid on Friday, according to Col. Manuelito Uzi, commanding officer of the 63rd Infantry Battalion.

Narciso Parane and Jovito Velasco were reportedly sleeping in a foxhole inside their safehouse in Barangay Sinantan, some 15 km away from the city proper, when the 14-member military team led by Lt. Richard Cadin raided the safe house at 2 a.m.

One of the men's companion, who acted as a lookout, managed to have a short exchange of fire with the soldiers, before fleeing.

Uzi said Parane and Velasco were immediately brought to an undisclosed safehouse for interrogation. "After that, we will bring them to a court of justice as we'll file illegal possession of firearms against them," he said.

Confiscated from the two were several guns and a pairs of binocular.

Uzi said the villagers tipped them off on the presence of the alleged rebels.

Military operations in Eastern Visayas had been intensified on orders of Major Jovito Palparan, commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division, based in Catbalogan, Samar, as part of their efforts to end the insurgency in the region.

Palparan had announced that he would solve the region's insurgency—one of the most active in the country—within six months to a year. *Carmela Reyes and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Boncodin: Malampaya fund less than ₱600M

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Palawan is getting less than P600 million from the Malampaya fund this year, way below the figure in the interim agreement signed by the provincial government and the national government, according to Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.

The interim agreement paved the way for the release of P1.2 billion for Palawan, representing the balance for half of the 40-percent local government share from the Camago-Malampaya Natural Gas-to-Power Project.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had released P600 million just before the May 2004 elections.

The first tranche of projects approved by former energy Secretary Vincent Perez cost P600 million. It was supposed to be released after the approval of the Department of Budget and Management but Boncodin said the projects would have to be reviewed by Malacañang.

She said two issues were involved in the release of the amount: The listing of projects and the amount.

"That was the instruction to us. We have to review it thoroughly," she said in an interview with radio dyPR.

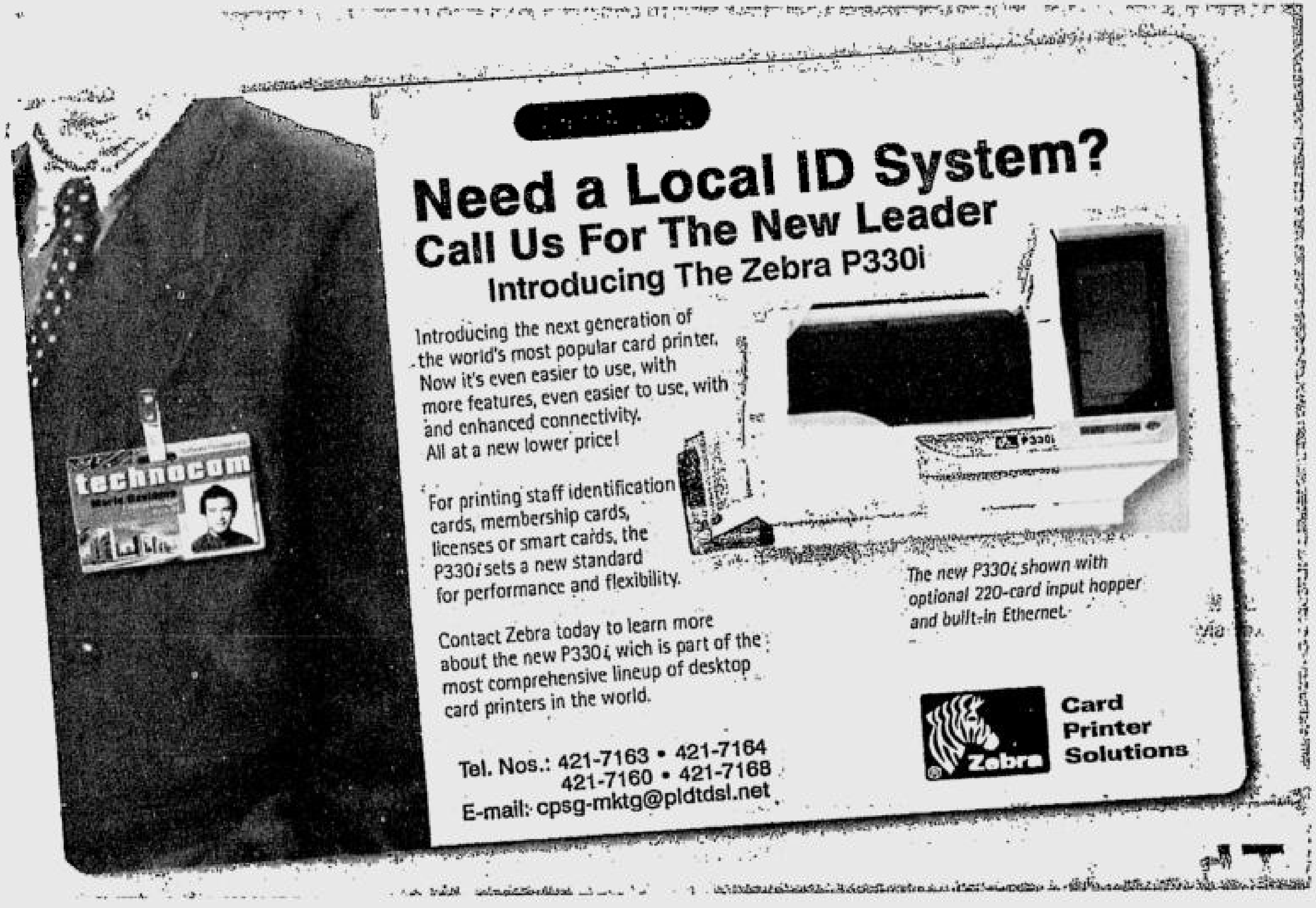
The projects should benefit more people and have high impact, she said.

She said she had talked with Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla about the Palawan share and was told that Lotilla had not seen the project listing yet because the endorsement was made by Perez before he left the government on March 15.

"I was sad about it," Gov. Joel Reyes said of Boncodin's statement.

"It would be an insult to former energy secretary Perez if secretary Lotilla will not endorse it," Reyes said.

He said there was nothing in the agreement that the projects would be reviewed by Malacañang because it only needed an endorsement from the Department of Energy. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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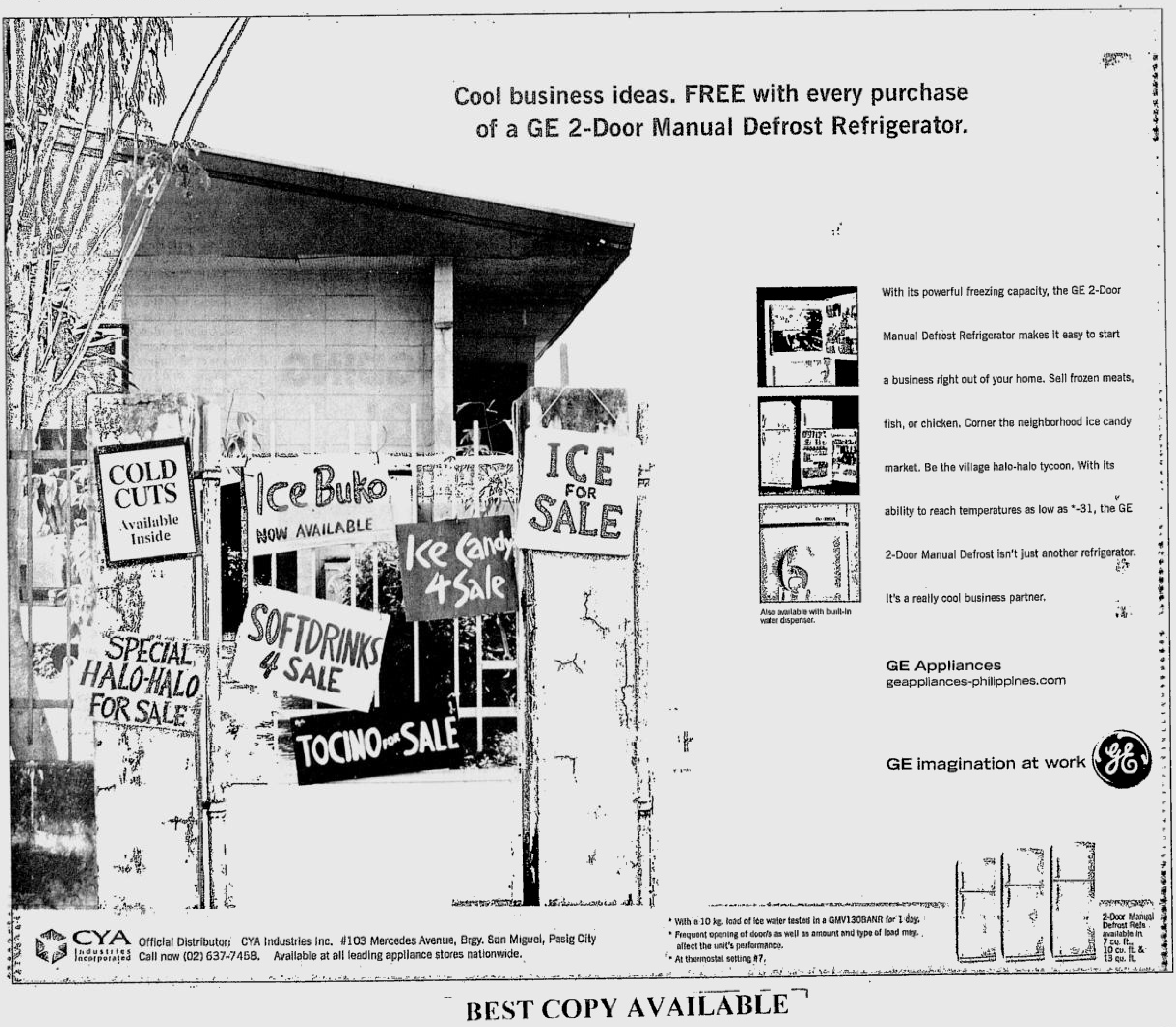
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Ilocos power firm says it's not overcharging users

LAOAG CITY—An official of an electric cooperative in Ilocos Norte said the cooperative did not overprice its consumers contrary to a supposed finding that it collected some P120 million in excess charges over an eight-year period starting 1997.

"Our books are open for review, evaluation and investigation," said Romillas Pascual, Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative general manager.

Pascual said Inec has yet to receive the result of the investigation that the Energy Regulatory Commission conducted on the company's power charges.

The ERC did not inform the cooperative that it was under investigation, saying the commission probably based its evaluation on reports that the power firm had submitted previously, he said.

"Inec submits various reports from invoices, sample bills and payment receipts to the ERC monthly. These records are the bases of the ERC to verify whether there was over recovery or under recovery [of power costs]," Pascual said.

The ERC was supposed to issue its observation on the reports submitted within six months from receipt of Inec documents, but Pascual said the ERC had yet to issue its comments.

Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. earlier announced that Inec had overcharged its consumers by P120 million, citing the ERC investigation on the cooperative's book of accounts.

Residential consumers comprise 93 percent of Inec's 105,372 (not 116,000 as earlier reported) consumers.

The Ilocos Norte provincial board, through Board Member Mariano Marcos II, earlier came out with similar findings on Inec's records.

Governor Marcos had said the ERC, through its chair, former Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano Jr., would furnish Inec the result of the investigation last week.

But Marie Chu, president of Inec's employees association, said Albano had told her that the ERC was still reviewing Inec's documents.

"I called up Chairman (Albano) to inquire about this supposed result because Inec employees were greatly disturbed by the reports coming out [in the media]. Albano assured me that the ERC was still reviewing our papers," Chu said.

Quoting Albano, Chu said: "Don't worry, the evaluation has not been finalized. We might have to review and re-compute [the figures]."

Rosita Bumanglag, Inec finance manager, said Inec had been transparent about its records, transactions and operational system when the cooperative's officials appeared before the provincial board's inquiry to explain its operations.

"We answered, point by point, the various issues that the board members raised. But we could not reconcile our figures with the calculations they made because we used different formulas," Bumanglag said.

She said Inec has not changed its power rates from 1991 to October 2004.

The rates were adjusted only in November last year when the Republic Act 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) of 2001 was implemented.

Under RA 9136, electric cooperatives are required to "unbundle" their rates or itemize the various charges according to cost and function to reflect the true cost of power being provided to different consumer types. *Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

LADY JUSTICE ICON
THE 10TH National Convention of Lawyers adopts a unique "Lady Justice" when it opened in Baguio City this week. The justice icon is patterned after a *bulol* (Ifugao faceless granary idols that are often portrayed kneeling on their haunches). VINCENT CABREZA

Trial of journalist slay suspect starts

PAGADIAN CITY—It appears that the Damalerio slay case is finally moving forward as a court in Cebu starts today the formal trial against the accused assasin.

Gemma Damalerio, wife of Edgar Damalerio, told the INQUIRER that Judge Ramon Codilla of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 19 of Cebu City will hear the case against former police officer Guillermo Wapile.

Damalerio was on his way home together with one of the witnesses when he was shot and killed by Wapile.

Wapile was subsequently charged before a local court here but the death of one of the witnesses, Edgar Amoro, prompted the Damalerio family to ask for a change of venue of the hearings.

Mrs. Damalerio cited security reasons and lack of confidence in the local courts. Damalerio's case was previously heard in the sala of Judge Rolando Goan of RTC Zamboanga del Sur.

The Supreme Court has approved the request on Feb. 14 and transferred the case to Codilla.

The SC also directed the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) here to bring Wapile to the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center (BBRC) in Lahug, Cebu City.

Mrs. Damalerio said a team of prosecutors formed by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez will represent the family.

The Supreme Court also directed Codilla to finish the trial within three months, she said.

They expected the court to finish the trial and issue a decision on the charges against Wapile by June.

Meanwhile, the local state prosecutor's office here recommended no bail for the three suspected killers of Amoro in the charge sheet filed before the local court.

But suspects Mohammad Abubakar Maulana, alias Madix, Norhan Ambol, alias Noh and another suspect remained at large because the court had yet to issue warrants for their arrest.

Maulana and Ambol were identified by PO2 Desiderio Pancho of the provincial police command as the one who shot and killed Amoro.

Pancho said he encountered the fleeing suspects along Bana St. a few minutes after Amoro was murdered.

He said the suspects even fired at him and hit one of his fingers.

Pancho said he believed the suspects thought he was responding to the incident.

Several witnesses also supported Pancho's claim about the identity of two of Amoro's killers.

But Maulana, in his counter affidavit, said he could not have participated in the killing of Amoro because he was attending the wedding of his younger sister in Barangay Binuhatan in Dinas, Zamboanga del Sur, about 40 kilometers from here, when the incident happened. *Hernan P. dela Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Sorsogon summit examines environment

SORSOGON CITY—Concerns about the *butanding* (whaleshark) in Donsol and manta rays in Bulan and Magallanes towns in Sorsogon have led various groups in the province to hold an environmental summit on May 4-5.

Protected wildlife head Annabele Barquilla said the summit is especially important for Sorsogon as it hosts various ecotourism destinations that need to be protected.

The Sorsogon Coalition for Environment, composed of media, environment, government and corporate entities, will hold the first provincial summit in Bicol to look into the cutting of trees, illegal fishing, illegal fishpond operation, solid waste management, pollution, and draw up solutions, said Public Information Agency Sorsogon manager Irma Guhit.

The move was an offshoot of the First Quezon-Bicol Media Environmental Forum spearheaded by Tanggol-Kalikasan held in October last year, she said.

The recent tragedy that struck Quezon province also hastened the holding of the activity, Guhit added. *Bobby Q. Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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April 25, 2005

Hybrid rice succeeds in S. Leyte

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN CITY—The success of the rice intensification program of the provincial government here has made Southern Leyte the number one rice producer in Eastern Visayas.

The province has also been recognized by the Department of Agriculture as the region's best performer in commercialization of hybrid rice, according to DA regional director Leo Cañeda.

Using hybrid *"higante"* and *"tisoy"* seeds planted in about 2,000 hectares, rice production of the province almost doubled, from 70 cavans to 125 to 140 cavans per hectare, Cañeda said.

Southern Leyte's success in hybrid rice production made Eastern Visayas second only to Davao in the implementation of the program nationwide, Cañeda said.

He said Gov. Rosette Lerias has also been invited to share the best practice of the province to the Philippine Hybrid Rice Convention in Singapore and in the Science City in Muñoz in Nueva Ecija.

Launched last year, the provincial government earmarked P1 million for "Oplan 50 plus" or the rice intensification program. The amount was used to procure fertilizers that planters had to pay for after the cropping season.

"We have to recover the cost for the sustainability of the program which the farmers can pay in goods. We should eliminate our culture of dole," said Lerias.

But many farmers were apprehensive because of the high cost of seeds. A cavan of hybrid rice seeds, which is good for one hectare, costs P2,000 while in-breed rice only costs P120 per cavan.

To address this concern, Lerias urged the mayors and municipal agriculture officers in the province to intensify their campaign to explain to the farmers the advantages of adopting the new technology in rice production.

BACK TO NORMAL
Children play at the fishport in Infanta town in Quezon, one of the areas in eastern Luzon that was devastated by four typhoons in December 2004. Hundreds of town residents were killed during the calamities. REM ZAMORA

Leyte lawmaker wants to divide province …

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Leyte Rep. Carmen Cari (5th district) said she has only the best intentions for filing a bill creating a new province in Eastern Visayas composed of the nine towns of her congressional district.

She said she wanted to divide Leyte because it is "too big a province." If the fifth district is a separate province, it will spur progress like what happened to Biliran when it became a separate province in 1992, she said.

Leyte has a land area of 5,712.80 square kilometers with 43 towns, two cities and five congressional districts.

The province, which has a population of more than 1.5 million, is classified as first-class with an income of more than P720 million as of 2003.

Biliran, with 12 municipalities, was a sub-province of Leyte until it became a separate province on May 11, 1992. Southern Leyte was also a part of Leyte but became an independent province in 1959.

Cari filed House Bill 03784 on Feb. 2, creating Western Leyte, with Baybay as its capital town. The other towns in the district are Abuyog, Hilongos, Hindang, Matalom, Inopacan, Javier, Mahaplag and Bato.

Pending

The bill is now pending before the House committee on local government chaired by Negros Oriental Rep. Emilio Macias.

Records of the provincial development office show that these nine towns have a population of 350,000 and a combined land area of 1,663.50 sq km. Its combined income as of 2003 was P374.248 million.

Except for Baybay, which is classified as a first class town, the other municipalities either belonged to third or fourth class. Baybay is home to the Leyte State University, formerly the Visayas State College of Agriculture (Visca), the region's foremost agricultural learning institution.

Requisites

Under the Local Government Code of 1991, a province may be created if it has an average annual income of not less P20 million based on 1991 constant prices and either of the following requisites: a contiguous territory of at least 2,000 sq km as certified by the Lands Management Bureau; or, a population of not less than 250,000.

The code also stipulates that the creation of a new province should not reduce the land area, population, and income of the mother province to less than the minimum requirements, which the law had prescribed.

Cari's bill enjoys the support of her sister, Leyte's first district Rep. Remedios Petilla who co-authored the bill.

Cari, who is now on her second term, stressed that her proposal was not "politically motivated."

"This is not to perpetuate our family in power but to [ensure] that development will reach these towns rather fast. And I believe we can achieve that if we become a province," she said.

Cari belongs to the Loreto clan whose main political bailiwick is in the fifth district. The clan hails from Baybay, the biggest town in the district in terms of population, land area and income.

Cari had earlier filed a bill converting Baybay into a city. She served the town as its mayor for nine years before she was elected congresswoman in 1998.

Eastern Visayas is composed of Leyte, Biliran, Southern Leyte, Samar, Eastern Samar and Northern Samar. It is considered to be one of the country's most depressed regions.

… but in Quezon, officials oppose split

LUCENA CITY—At least three Quezon officials have expressed opposition to the resurrection in Congress of the proposed division of the province into Quezon del Sur and Quezon del Norte.

"That's a very divisive and sensitive issue that our people can't afford, especially during this time of economic displacement. Prices of basic goods continue to increase and yet here we are talking of dividing our province and our people," said Board Member Kelly Portes.

He suggested that the proposed separation of the province be temporarily shelved.

Quezon is considered the longest province in the country.

The four Quezon representatives, Lorenzo Erin Tañada III, Rafael Nantes, Danilo Suarez, and Proceso Alcala have refiled House Bill 2862.

The proposal was started by Nantes and former senator and Rep. Wigberto Tañada in July 6, 1998 during the 11th Congress.

The bill would slice off a "Quezon del Sur" from the original province of 1.72 million people living in 40 towns and Lucena City.

It would have 22 municipalities and Gumaca town as capital. The remaining towns and one city will comprise "Quezon del Norte" with Lucena City as still the capital.

The proponents argued that the legislation would hasten the economic development of both provinces, particularly the fourth district, known as Lamon Bay area.

Board Member Eladio Pasamba, said if the division of the province materializes, the southern part, Bondoc Peninsula and Lamon Bay areas, would soon be in the list of the country's poor provinces because of limited source of income.

"All businesses that operate in Quezon are confined in the province's first and second districts. The third and fourth districts in south Quezon will live miserably if they [are] separated," explained Pasamba, who hails from Mauban town in the first district.

"That proposal only serves gerrymandering purposes. A politician would find it easy to control a small area. But that would never benefit the people," he said.

Board Member James Rey Bico said the politicians just want to have a small campaign area. "The proposal is untimely and a futile exercise in this period of economic hardship and poverty." *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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DFA official strangled by robbers

From page A1

was strangled, suggesting the intruders had had an attack of nerves, officials said.

"They entered the house wearing shirts as hoods over their heads because the victim might have known them," said Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO).

Running for help

While the intruders were on the upper floor, Leticia, 61, escaped and dashed to a nearby police community precinct to ask for help.

But the killers were gone by the time the police arrived.

The white towel was still tightly wound around Ramos' face and neck.

Razon said the break-in bore the hallmarks of an *akyat-bahay* (porch-climbing) gang operation, although police had yet to determine what items were taken from the house.

Ramos was the second public servant to die in Metro Manila in recent weeks. Former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot was shot dead in a restaurant two weeks ago. His murder is still unsolved.

Routine studied

"We found out that the robbery was pulled off by three *akyat-bahay* malefactors," Razon said. "When Leticia opened the door, they pounced on her, gagged and hogtied her."

But Razon said "we will also look at other motives."

He said the men had tied Ramos' hands, then strangled her in her bed.

Her mouth had been taped shut, police said.

"They may have studied their routine ... that at 5:30 a.m., Leticia Ramos would open the door and come out of the house to sweep," said Senior Supt. Jovito Gutierrez, chief of the Makati Police Department.

Scaled the gate

The intruders had apparently climbed over the house's green gate, over which it was easy to jump, said Gutierrez.

Leticia, who also worked at the Department of Foreign Affairs as an officer in the strategic planning and policy section, was brought to the Ospital ng Makati, where she was treated for a gash in her neck.

She was discharged at 1 p.m., the hospital staff said.

She was too shocked to narrate their ordeal in detail, said Senior Supt. Asher Dolina, chief of the National Capital Region-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Diplomats in disbelief

A career diplomat, Alicia Ramos spent almost half her life in government service.

Malacañang denounced the killing of Ramos.

"We condemn this brutal slaying. The police are under instructions to leave no stone unturned in investigating this and to bring the perpetrators to justice," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Expressing shock, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said: "We abhor these acts of violence and hope and pray that those responsible for the crime will be arrested and prosecuted."

US Embassy spokesperson Karen Kelley expressed disbelief.

"You're kidding ... How awful," Kelley said.

Japanese Embassy spokesperson Shuhei Ogawa said: "My gosh! She worked closely with the embassy. She was very eager in discussing issues with us. She was very helpful to the embassy and supported us."

'A morbid scene'

The sisters, both single, were the only ones who lived at the house, police said. Razon said they did not have any security.

They had a helper, a woman, who came in every now and then when called to clean the house.

She will be invited for questioning, said Dolina.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay arrived at the crime scene in slippers at 10:30 a.m.

"Cigarette butts littered the room ... *Parang nagpapalakas ng loob* (It seemed like they were trying to steel their nerves). It was a morbid scene," said Binay.

Reporters were barred from entering the house.

"It appears that the robbers did not take everything valuable ... not everything that could be taken, because I saw a VCD player inside the room," the mayor added.

From the way the attack was carried out, it was apparent that the killers had studied their subjects well, Dolina said.

Task force formed

The Philippine National Police formed a task force to investigate the killing.

The group included investigators from the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the NCRPO Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division, the Southern Police District Scene-of-the-Crime Operatives and the Makati Police Criminal Investigation Division, with Gutierrez as team leader.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao also ordered a crackdown on *akyat-bahay* gangs.

Night and dawn patrols

He also ordered crime prevention patrols by community volunteers, "especially during the night and dawn," PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said.

Police said they had mobilized their informants to try and track down the killers.

They would go from "house to house" to ask neighbors what they heard or saw in the area at the hour of the break-in and killing, police said.

"We never heard of her having any problems ... She was very efficient, very quiet, a hard worker," Foreign Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin said. *With a report from Luige A. del Puerto*

'A brilliant, efficient and quiet diplomat'

From page A1

Makati home immediately upon hearing the news on the radio.

Friend of 30 years

"I can't understand why this happened. She doesn't have any enemies," Ebdalin said.

Ramos was a career official for more than 30 years.

They had been friends that long, Ebdalin said, as he and Ramos took the difficult foreign service exam at the same time.

"She was the topnotcher. She was number one," Ebdalin said.

1995 controversy

The daughter of a former diplomat, Ramos also served as ambassador to New Zealand and Greece.

As assistant secretary, Ramos handled Philippine affairs with China, Korea, New Zealand, members of the the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Pakistan, Ebdalin said.

But it was the controversy over Flor Contemplacion that was etched in many a Filipino memory.

The hanging caused a diplomatic upheaval.

Public outrage

The case was highly emotional for many Filipinos, who considered Contemplacion a symbol of the "neglected majority."

Amid public outrage over the hanging, then President Fidel Ramos ordered the "immediate and indefinite recall" of Alicia Ramos from Singapore.

The move amounted to a downgrading of diplomatic relations between Singapore and the Philippines.

Then Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo resigned. His resignation was soon followed by that of Labor Secretary Nieves Confessor.

Ramos served a 90-day preventive suspension together with Consul General Reynaldo Catapang and more than a dozen other labor and embassy officials whom the Gancayco Commission said had been negligent in dealing with Filipino workers in Singapore.

The commission ordered the filing of administrative charges against Ramos and the others.

Ramos was cleared when the Ombudsman dismissed the charges of "neglect of duty and inefficiency and incompetence in the performance of official functions." *Sources: PDI archives, www.dfa.gov.ph and http://www.ppseawa.org/95S/Singapore.html*

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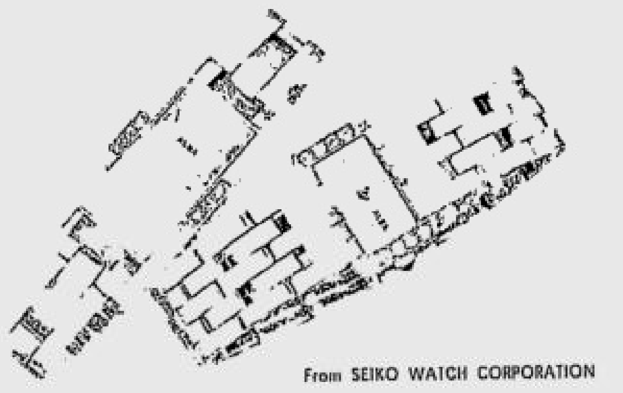

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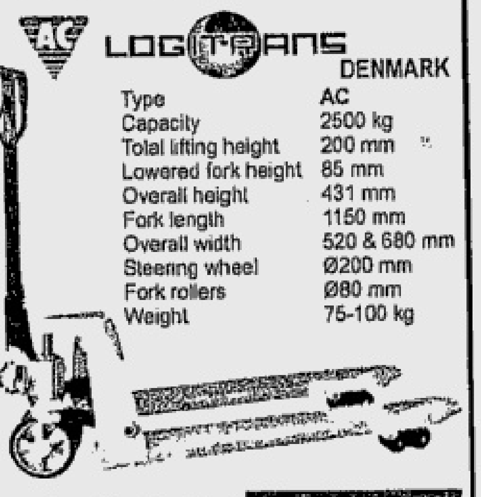

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"What in shingles can defeat this goal?"

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"What happens to roofs infected with algae?"

Answer: Roofing materials that are exposed to high humidity get discolored and stained. This is true not only for shingles but also for other types of roofs.

These dark stains are algae growth. They can cover the entire roof after some years and make the roof look ugly indeed.

"How do we prevent algae from attacking the roof?"

Answer: To eliminate algae growth, CertainTeed produces Algae Resistant (AR) shingles.

"How are shingles made algae resistant?'

Answer: Shingle surfaces are covered with ceramic granules to give color.

In AR shingles, these granules are embedded with copper oxide. The copper leaches gradually over time, especially when it rains, and kills algae organisms that come in contact with shingles.

With this protection, CertainTeed AR shingles help maintain the natural beauty, color and distinctive appeal of your roof for years.

"Why is it worth your money to invest in AR shingles?"

Answer: An important part in the appeal of your house comes from your roof. It represents more than 50% of its exterior.

A roof that is unprotected from algae attack suffers more than discoloration. The roof is stained and loses its beauty and natural look.

"Instead of buying AR shingles, may we just apply paints with algicide on shingles?"

Answer: Paints with algicide may apply well on concrete and metal roofs without side effects. But their chemical composition may damage the integrity and performance of asphalt shingles.

"Do shingle manufacturers provide warranties on roofs coated with algicide paints?"

Answer: Because of the possible harm on the asphalt, asphalt shingles manufacturers will withdraw the warranty on their roofing material applied with such paints.

"Does algicide coating of shingles offer long term solution to algae attacks?"

Answer: Application on shingles of paints with algicide offers dubious protection from algae attacks.

These paints are brushed on the exterior of ceramic granules. With the direct exposure of the roof to heat, cold, wind and rain, the paint may peel and wash off the granules, unlike the AR shingles' copper oxide which is embedded within the ceramic granules.

"What models of CertainTeed are Algae Resistant (AR)?"

Answer: The following shingle models have algae resistance with a warranty of 10 years: CT20 AR and Landmark AR Series. The following have a warranty of 15 years: Grand Manor, Carriage House, Presidential Shake, Landmark TL.

"But your AR shingles may be more expensive than others."

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'Jueteng' trio dictate on PNP posts?

From page A1

month, shrinking the police officers' take from P5 million to P3 million. That's on top of what they get from the operators, also estimated to be in the millions.

Patronized by the poor, jueteng has reportedly become a P30-billion-a-year industry which government after government has failed to kill.

Areas where jueteng remain allegedly rampant include Pampanga, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Quezon, Rizal, Bulacan and Laguna, according to the police official.

Allegations that ousted President Joseph Estrada received huge payoffs from jueteng lords led to his impeachment and eventual overthrow in 2001.

Unfounded

Reacting to allegations that senior officials receive millions in jueteng payola every month, the Philippine National Police said these were unfounded.

"That is why even before these reports came out, the police had already ordered stations to intensify operations against all forms of illegal gambling," the PNP spokesperson, Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye ignored the report that three relatives of a top government official were the top recipients of jueteng money.

"All we can say is that we consider jueteng illegal. This disease has been there for a long time and it will require the concerted effort of all sectors, especially our citizens, to help us reduce or totally stop it," Bunye said yesterday on dzXL radio.

Code names

The alleged code names of the three relatives of the top government official were M1, M2 and JS7. M1 is the oldest of the three; M2 is a young politician in Luzon, and JS7 is his uncle, the INQUIRER source said.

Not only that, the source said, many local executives in Luzon provinces with huge jueteng operations were either directly or indirectly involved as financiers or managers of the illegal numbers game.

The politicians all have the blessings of M1, he said.

Many are either political allies or members of a party identified with the top government official.

When simply on the take, what a governor receives is the same as that of a police provincial director, the police official said.

Paradise

He said the trio—M1, M2 and JS7—lobby so their boys would get regional and provincial posts in Luzon considered to be "paradise" by the police because of the huge jueteng payoffs.

But these "outsiders" do not control all police officials, the source clarified.

A top police official confirmed that policemen "up to the provincial level" were on the take in some of these regions. But regional police chiefs and the top brass in the PNP were not, he said.

He explained that posts in these regions were given to some of the best police officers as a form of "reward."

"As you will notice, all the best officers are assigned in Central or Southern Luzon, and they usually deliver," he said.

Subsidy

In many instances, what the officers receive from jueteng subsidizes police stations and is used to finance operations, according to the official.

The PNP leadership turns a blind eye to the arrangement. "If it can be helped, the police say nothing about it. We're silent. But this does not mean the top officials encourage it," he said.

"That's the way it goes. If a police chief receives money from jueteng, that's the risk he takes. Sorry for him if someone squeals on him in the province," he said.

Regional chiefs and top officials in Camp Crame already have "many other sources of money" and are careful not to dip their hands in jueteng, he said.

"As your (career) advances, you become more careful. I don't think they (top police officials) touch it (jueteng money)," the official said.

But the INQUIRER source claimed otherwise.

Bagman

A unit in the PNP acts as the "bagman," collecting around P22 million a month for the big bosses.

"So everybody's happy, from the police chiefs in the provinces to the generals in Crame," he said.

"The system has been in place for quite sometime. *Inabutan na ni Art yan* (It's been there before Art)," he said, referring to PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao.

Reacting to the news reports that jueteng operations were on the rise, Lomibao ordered anew a crackdown on jueteng.

"Lomibao ordered all the regional directors (in) Region 1 to Region 5, the Cordillera (Autonomous Region) and NCRPO (National Capital Region Police Office) to intensify the all-out campaign [to stamp out jueteng] in view of persistent reports of increasing jueteng operations," Bataoil said in a text message sent to the INQUIRER.

He noted that in an earlier memorandum, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes had directed the police to form a Task Force on Anti-Illegal Gambling and to be more aggressive in their anti-jueteng campaign.

The head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Chief Supt. Ricardo Dapat, now heads the task force.

Policemen have also been reminded of the three-strike policy. The policy states that if there have been three successive successful operations against jueteng in a province or region, the provincial or regional police chief will be sacked.

"[Lomibao] reiterated that the previous policies [on] command responsibility stands, and violators will be dealt with accordingly," Bataoil said.

President's home province

The government's campaign to stamp out jueteng is being hobbled by the unfettered operations of gambling lords in Pampanga, President Macapagal-Arroyo's home province, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

"In fact, there's no honest-to-goodness action from Malacañang [to eradicate the illegal numbers game]," said Pimentel, who filed a resolution seeking an inquiry into the implementation of the year-old anti-jueteng law.

The Senate minority leader said that the authorities had failed miserably to enforce Republic Act No. 9287, which was signed into law in April last year and imposes higher penalties and fines on jueteng operators.

"If we go by the records, only the runners—the hoi polloi—are being rounded up. Not the big ones," he said. "And the information filtering into my office is that a number of jueteng protectors are not only members of the police but also local officials."

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HERE come the brides and grooms of the Mangyan-Taubuhid tribe at the municipal park of Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro.

MARLET SALAZAR

77 Mangyan couples join . . .

From page A1

The couples, whose ages ranged from 15 to 66 years old, came from Barangay Sabang. Most of them had long been married according to the Taubuhid tradition.

But for the civil ceremony, some of the couples wore western gowns and *barong* Tagalog, which were either borrowed or rented because, as local officials later revealed, the Mangyan felt they were already civilized.

The mass wedding was one of the highlights of the town's week-long celebration dubbed the "Bahaghari Festival."

Relatives and neighbors of the couples mingled with lowlanders who came to witness the wedding and join the fiesta.

Second mass wedding

First, a select group of the Taubuhid presented their traditions and rituals. This was followed by a civil ceremony administered by Mayor Aristeo Baldos Sr.

This was the second mass civil wedding for the municipality. The first time was at the start of Baldos' term as mayor when 52 couples were married.

In his speech after the ceremony, Baldos said the local government had "no intention of eradicating the Mangyan culture and tradition but is working on preserving them instead."

He added that one of the initiatives of the local government was to help the Mangyan coexist in harmony with lowland folk.

He said he also wanted to give the Mangyan easy access to education. Registering as married couples would enable their children to easily enroll in schools.

Wedding preparations

Preparations for the ceremony took at least a week. Three days were spent rehearsing the reenactment of the Taubuhid traditions and rituals. Another three days were devoted to rehearsing the wedding march.

Paye Baldos, the mayor's daughter, assigned a group to visit the Mangyan community in the mountains to direct and prepare their participation.

On the wedding day itself, the Mangyan, in traditional dress, headed the processional, followed by local officials and then the couples.

The newlyweds received gifts from their *ninong* and *ninang* (wedding sponsors).

The Taubuhid, also known as Batangan, is one of seven tribes in Mindoro that are collectively and more popularly known as Mangyan. The other groups are the Alangan, Bangon, Buhid, Iraya, Hanunuo and Tadyawan.

Representing the barangay during the event was Linagun Manluwag, although he was not the chieftain, said locals.

Protestant Mangyan

Manluwag, like most of the Mangyan men, was in full traditional gear. He wore a *foon* (headdress) and *omi* (false moustache). Around his waist was a piece of coconut husk lit with a *baga* (small fire) to drive away the *niknik* (gnats).

He also had a *kwako* (pipe), but later said he had given up smoking for health reasons.

Manluwag said their source of living came from *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming) and hunting. They also planted root crops.

They carried a *sabi* (basket) which they used as a container for food and hunting tools.

Manluwag, 50, has seven children and is a baptized Protestant. His family attends Bible school.

He said American missionaries taught them about salvation and the promise of eternal life.

Malacañang blows hot . . .

From page A1

be wavering in its support for labor's demand for a wage increase, especially since the country's biggest employers' group voiced opposition to any salary adjustment on or before Labor Day.

"Let us not tie ourselves to a specific deadline. It's difficult to raise the expectations of our workers that something will happen in the regional wage boards on or before May 1," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in an interview over dzMM radio yesterday.

Strike threat

"All we know is that the process [to decide on the wage increase petition] is already moving, so let's just wait. It's hard to give a deadline," Bunye said.

Less than four days ago, Malacañang was all for a minimum wage increase. Worried about a threat by labor groups to launch a mammoth strike on Labor Day, it ordered the regional wage boards to expedite the review of labor's long pending petition for a P125 increase in the daily minimum wage and come up with a decision on or before May 1.

Bunye even said that it was about time the minimum wage was raised so the working class could cope with the steep rise in the prices of goods and services.

Employers should adopt "a spirit of give-and-take," he added.

Yesterday, Malacañang was singing a different tune, especially after the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (which is represented in the regional wage boards) strongly objected to a proposal to increase wages at this time.

Changing circumstances?

Ecop claimed that its members could not absorb the added costs as proposed by Malacañang. Instead of raising wages, the group suggested that the government reduce the amount of taxes withheld from workers to give them a bigger take-home pay.

Instead of focusing on when the minimum wage increase would be approved, Bunye stressed that "what is more important is that a lot of sectors realize that the circumstances have changed."

He added: "If ever there will be a reasonable hike in our workers' wages, this will be balanced with the interest of business. We believe we can come up with a satisfactory middle arrangement."

INTERROBANG?!
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- A special registration rate shall be available to all registrants who will pay onsite during the launch.
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INTERROBANG?!

Ciara never complained of illness that killed her

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BEFORE she became ill, Ciara Marie, 19, daughter of Mandaluyong Rep. Benhur Abalos, had been going around the metropolis, seldom staying home, busy working on a project for her school organization.

Her family remains clueless on what could have caused the Escherichia Coli, or E. Coli, infection that led to her death Friday night.

"A few days before she had fever, she went to a lot of places like in Divisoria," her twin Charisse Marie said when asked what could have caused Ciara's illness.

E. Coli bacteria may be found in food, beach water or wells contaminated by human waste, experts say.

This type of fecal coliform bacteria can cause diarrhea, hepatitis and cholera when ingested.

Ciara was at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at about 8 p.m. Wednesday to accompany her grandfather, Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos and his wife to the United States.

She had been feeling ill since the day before but thought it was only due to her monthly period, Charisse told the INQUIRER.

Ciara already had her boarding pass and already paid her terminal fee when her grandfather noticed her shaking after coming from the toilet.

They canceled her trip and a family friend volunteered to drive Ciara home.

But she promised that she would just follow her grandparents on Friday.

Before leaving, she flashed "the sweetest smile," Abalos told the INQUIRER yesterday, a few hours after arriving in the country from his US trip, cut short by Ciara's death.

"Because I would be missing her company during the trip, I kept on hugging her," the grieving grandfather added.

He said he never knew it would be the last time he would embrace her eldest granddaughter.

When Ciara got home, she just stayed in her room.

"Maybe she was already in pain. She just did not let us know," Charisse said.

On Thursday night, "after three days of fever, body malaise, diarrhea and vomiting," she was brought to the Cardinal Santos Medical Center, a family statement said.

She never got to fulfill her promise to join her grandfather in the US.

She died of multiple organ failure at about 10 p.m. Friday, almost the same time of her scheduled flight to the States, Abalos said.

"God has his ways. Maybe He wants her to die as an angel so she would no longer suffer," he added.

In its statement, the family said Ciara "developed Escherichia Coli infection which caused the diarrhea and the high grade fever."

This "eventually became full-blown bacterial sepsis destroying all the blood components leading to disseminated intravascular coagulation and multi-organ system failure," the statement added.

Her remains lie at the house of her grandparents on Kanlaon Street in Mandaluyong City. It was the house where she grew up.

The street was closed to traffic yesterday morning.

Abalos described his granddaughter as a "very simple" girl despite growing up in a wealthy family.

He said his wife Cora, while on their way to the airport on Wednesday, even asked Ciara why she packed old clothes instead of buying new ones.

She replied it was fine because, anyway, she would be putting on jackets, Abalos related.

The grandfather, who appeared tired after his emergency trip back to the country, smiled during the wake, pointing out that Ciara got her smile from him.

"She always smiled. She never had a serious face," Abalos said.

Ciara, an incoming senior at De La Salle University, had also told her grandfather that she wanted to put up a preparatory school.

"Many love Ciara. She was very active in community service," her twin Charisse, younger by about seven minutes, said.

Ciara even taught catechism in an urban poor community in Mandaluyong City.

After each session, she would feed the kids, Abalos added.

Ciara would have turned 20 on June 23.

Her uncle, city Councilor Jon Abalos said her funeral was tentatively set for Wednesday.

Based on initial plans, she would be buried in the Aglipay Cemetery in Mandaluyong beside her younger brother Bryan, who died inside their mother's womb.

But Charisse said their father Benhur wanted to bury Ciara in a private place but still in Mandaluyong.

Green and white balloons, Ciara's favorite colors, will accompany her funeral, Charisse said.

"If it's my time to go, then it's my time to go," Ciara used to tell Charisse.

Son of former police general in traffic spat

A SON of former police Director Eduardo Matillano was reported to have engaged a policeman in a tense confrontation following a vehicular accident along Meralco Avenue in Pasig City last week.

Police records show that Bruce Matillano, 32, and SPO1 Genaro Blasurca, 42, traded accusations after the Toyota Revo of Blasurca was tailended by the Mercedes Benz driven by a friend of Bruce last April 19.

Blasurca said that he was talking to the Benz owner, Beejay Punzalan, when Bruce arrived. Bruce then allegedly hit Blasurca in the face. The former police officials son then allegedly flashed a gun tucked in his waist.

But in his counter-complaint, the son of the former chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group said it was Blasurca who bullied his friend and flashed a gun. *Edson C. Tandoc*

Locked gate fails to block festivity

DESPITE a locked front gate and a stern warning from the city government, environmentalists still managed to celebrate Earth Day inside the disputed Arroceros Forest Park in Manila yesterday.

"It is illogical for anybody to stop the celebration of Earth Day," Odette Alcantara of Mother Earth Philippines said, who joined festivities and a tour of the park. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

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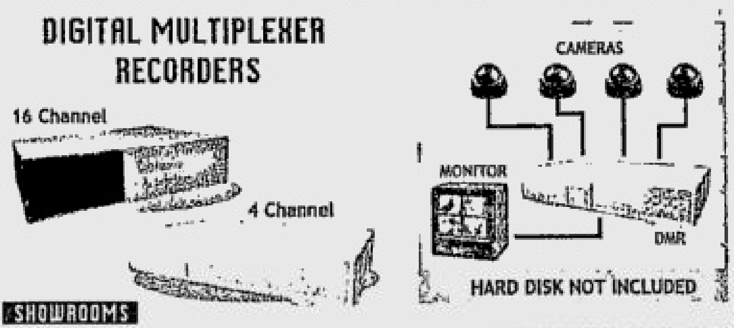

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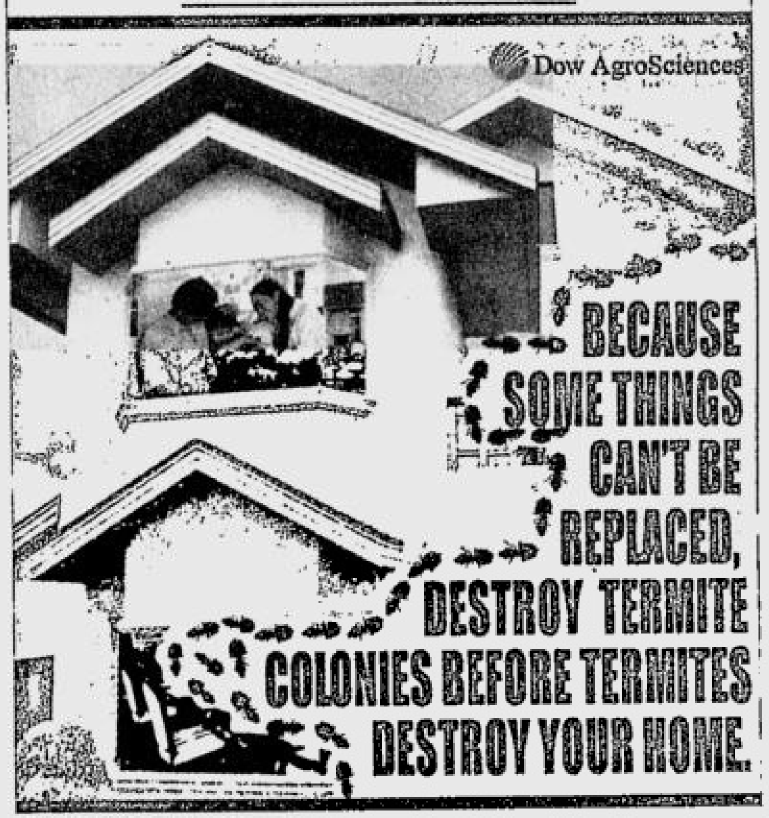
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NOTICE OF 20-HOUR WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION IN VALENZUELA, MEYCAUAYAN AND OBANDO WATER DISTRICTS, AND PORTIONS OF MALABON CITY

Maynilad Water Services Inc. has scheduled a 20-hour water service interruption in the entire Valenzuela City; the Meycauayan and Obando Water Districts and portions of Malabon City from 9 p.m., Thursday, April 28 to 5 p.m., Friday, April 29, 2005.

The water service interruption is due to the interconnection of a 600mm S.P. Mainline to the existing 1200mm S.P. Mainline along Gen. Luis corner Mariano St., Caloocan City; replacement of the 1200mm Butterfly valve's actuator along Gen. Luis corner 720 Compound Road (fronting Vista Verde North), Caloocan City; and replacement of the 1050mm Butterfly valve's actuator along Maysan St. fronting Petron Gasoline Station, Valenzuela City.

The project is meant to improve the water supply in the area.

The areas that will have no water during the service interruption are the whole of Valenzuela City, Meycauayan Water District and Obando Water District, including Fatima General Hospital, Polo General Hospital and San Miguel Corporation. Areas in Malabon City that will have no water are barangays Maysilo, Panghulo and Santol.

In view of the water service interruption, affected customers are advised to store water good for 20 hours. They may check with Maynilad Hotline 1626, the nearest branch office, or their barangay chairman for the schedule of water rationing in their respective areas.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong pang-unawa.

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Drive vs no plates revived

By Margaux C. Ortiz

IT HAS been an on-off campaign and now its on again.

Beginning today, motorists caught driving vehicles without authorized license plates would be apprehended.

National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) chief Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr. has ordered the full reimplementation of the "No Plate, No Travel" policy in Metro Manila.

Razon issued the directive after Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes and members of the Metro Manila Mayors' Council signed an agreement to prohibit motorists from using commemorative plates.

The NCRPO director stressed that motorists caught using fake or unauthorized commemorative plates would be arrested.

However, Razon said the use of authorized commemorative plates would still be allowed "as long as the driver also displays the original license plate issued by the Land Transportation Office (LTO)."

"Pending the cancellation on the use of the commemorative plates, the latest issued commemorative plates may still be used provided they do not cover the regular LTO car plates," Razon said in a statement.

He said the order would help authorities in controlling the number of car theft cases and other criminal acts in the metropolis.

Razon added that car theft and kidnapping syndicates often used fake or expired commemorative plates to confuse pursuing lawmen.

The no plate, no travel policy is a standing rule that was first vigorously enforced last year to combat the rise of car thefts and kidnapping.

Last year, it was agreed upon by government and car sellers that new vehicles sold should already have their license plates.

Vehicles without authorized plates were impounded and their owners fined P5,000.

Atienza bans MMDA 'goons' from Manila

DESCRIBING enforcers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority as "barong-clad goons," Manila Mayor Lito Atienza prohibited them from conducting clearing operations in his city.

Atienza ordered the ban after a shooting incident marred an MMDA clearing operation in Paco last week. The shots fired killed pedicab driver and wounded another.

"No amount of good intentions will justify the loss of lives," Atienza said in a statement.

"The problem with these MMDA people is that they are masquerading as public servants but are actually barong-clad goons," the mayor said.

The mayor said that only MMDA traffic operations would be allowed in the city.

MMDA officials have denied instigating the shooting by pointing out that their men were not armed. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

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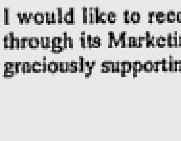
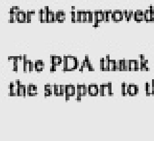


DR. WALFRIDO P. CRUZ
President
Philippine Dental Association

With warmth and cordiality, I would like to convey my appreciation to all member dentists of the Philippine Dental Association who will attend the PDA 97th Annual Convention and Scientific Meeting which will be held at the PICC from April 30 – May 6, 2005 with the theme: "Integrating the Diversity and Services of the Health Care Professions."

Our participants are assured of a well conceptualized convention this year covering the whole week schedules. We know that you will be largely benefited because you are assured of an unbeatable blend of technology, education and camaraderie. We hope you can make it and see for yourself what this convention is in store for all of us.

It is also worth while to mention the support of some sponsors who are committed to make this convention a success. With this, I would like to recognize the share of Lamoiyan Corporation through its Marketing Services Manager, Mr. Anthony Ang for graciously supporting this convention.



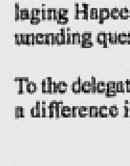
DR. MARIO K. ESQUILLO
President-Elect & General Chairman
97th PDA Annual Convention and Scientific Meeting

It is with such great honor and pride that we greet all our delegates, participants and guests who will take part in this year's 97th PDA Annual Convention and Scientific Meeting from April 30 – May 6, 2005 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Over the years, the PDA has amply demonstrated its concern for members to grow and improve their learning experience. Once again, this convention is a re-affirmation of our thrust and commitment to see our members appreciating and treasuring the value of the latest technological advances in the world of Dentistry today.

With the theme, "Integrating the Diversity and Services of the Health Care Professions", it is our fervent hope that all our member dentists will be one with us to carry the torch of learning for the improved oral health of our people.

The PDA thank the management of Lamoiyan Corporation for the support to the 97th PDA Annual Convention.



CECILIO K. PEDRO
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Lamoiyan Corporation, the company behind the leading Filipino toothpaste brand - Hapee - welcomes the delegates to the Philippine Dental Association's 97th Annual Convention on April 30 to May 6, 2005 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

May this seven–day event give you more inspiration to be more committed to your chosen field of endeavor for the benefit of our fellow Filipinos. This event will also bear witness to the unraveling of Hapee toothpaste new look and improved formula, giving it better efficacy and drawing more happy smiles from our consumers.

The promise of continued improvement of our products and services is Lamoiyan's deep commitment to the Filipino people who continually gives us support and appreciation beyond our expectations. At dahil laging Hapee ang Pinoy, we are simply happy too to dedicate this unending quest for excellence to all our Filipino brothers and sisters.

To the delegates, continue to strive for excellence and may you make a difference in this world for the glory of God.

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PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITIES
April 30, 2005 (Saturday)	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Pre-Convention Seminar (Prof. Stanley Malamed) on Management of Dental Emergencies and Updates in Local Anesthesia
	1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Ingress of Contractor Kits Assembly
May 1, 2005 (Sunday)	8:00 am - 12:00 nn	Pierre Fauchard Academy
	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Registration
	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Ingress of Trade Exhibitors
	2:00 pm - 11:00 pm	ICD Convocation
May 2, 2005 (Monday)	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Registration
	9:00 am - 10:00 am	Ecumenical Celebration
	10:00 am - 12:00 nn	Opening Ceremony (Plenary Hall, PICC)
	12:00 nn - 12:30 pm	Formal Opening of Trade Exhibit
	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Health Screening
	1:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Scientific Sessions
	6:00 pm - 12:00 nn	Fellowship Night (Reception Hall, PICC)
May 3, 2005 (Tuesday)	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Registration
	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Health Screening
	8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Orientation & Workshop for Incoming Presidents (President's Dialogue) Manila Hotel
	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Scientific Sessions
	10:00 am - 1:00 pm	Alumni Homecoming
	10:00 am - 7:00 pm	Trade Exhibits
	2:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Council of Deans (Heritage Hotel) Philippine Association of Dental Colleges - Southeast Asia Association for Dental Education Symposium for Dental Faculty
	5:00 pm - 12:00 mn	House of Delegates (1st Session), Manila Pavilion
May 4, 2005 (Wednesday)	8:00 am - 3:00 pm	Election of PDA Officers
	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Registration
	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Scientific Sessions
	10:00 am - 7:00 pm	Trade Exhibits
	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Health Screening
	7:00 pm - 12:00 mn	Awards Night (Hyatt Hotel & Casino Manila, Pedro Gil, Malate)
May 5, 2005 (Thursday)	8:00 am - 2:00 pm	House of Delegates (2nd Session), Manila Pavilion
	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Registration
	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Health Screening
	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Scientific Sessions
	10:00 am - 7:00 pm	Trade Exhibits
	5:00 pm - 12:00 mn	Presidents' Night (Manila Hotel) By Invitation Only
May 6, 2006 (Friday)	8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Registration
	9:00 am - 12:00 nn	Scientific Sessions
	9:00 am - 1:00 pm	Trade Exhibits
	1:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Egress of Trade Exhibits
	6:00 pm - 12:00 mn	Appreciation Night (Casino Filipino, Parañaque) By Invitation Only

SAVE YOUR TEETH WITH HAPEE'S "GUMTECT"

A tooth well taken cared of can probably save the rest from falling out. A white spot that is attended by a dentist at its onset can very well save you thousands of pesos spent for dentures or false teeth.

Dental care can be expensive, ranging from a filling, the so-called "pasta", at a few hundred to a couple of hundred more for an extraction, culminating in false teeth that can place a dent in your wallet. Maybe that's one reason why many people endure a chip or two in their porcelain smile, as long as it's not too prominent or embarrassing.

But why wait for the bills, which reflect the amount of treatment and restoration that must be performed on your teeth, to stack up? Lamoiyan Corporation, the creator of Hapee Gumtect, and other oral care products, provides two alternatives to keep those teeth healthy and glowing perfectly at very affordable prices.

GUMTECT
GUMTECT
GUMTECT

The first, of course, is prevention. Nothing can replace the regular and meticulous brushing of teeth after every meal. Flossing removes dirt left by food that the toothbrush cannot reach. It is the accumulation of all the dirt in one's teeth that causes cavities and other oral-related problems.

Dentist Dr. Enrico Dolatre elaborates, "A person who does not brush his teeth regularly, does not visit the dentist, and does not floss is likely to have tooth decay. Not brushing one's teeth can make the saliva acidic, soaking the tooth's outer covering called the enamel. The enamel is already considered the hardest calcified tissue in the human body but can still be dissolved by acid, resulting to cavities. Flossing is also important because it can remove the food that lodges in between the teeth but cannot be removed by brushing; this residue food turns into acid and weakens the teeth."

The first symptom of weak teeth is a toothache. If ignored or unattended to, the affected tooth decays until small parts of it chip away. The lack of treatment could lead to damage to the gums or bones. At this point, the tooth begins to wobble and eventually falls off.

Another sign that tooth decay has reached a higher degree is the transformation of the gum's normal pink color to red. The gums, too, had begun to swell at this point. This condition is known as gingivitis and requires a trip to the dentist.

The bleeding of gums, which usually happens during brushing, is the first sign of trouble. Left untreated or ignored, the normal pink color turns into red. Swelling had already occurred by this point. A visit to the dentist becomes necessary. Further neglect could prolong the damage to the gums, leading to periodontitis and eventual tooth loss.

Dr. Dolatre elaborates, "Dirt that has stayed between the teeth for a long time turns into plaque. When this hardens and becomes tartar, it becomes an irritant. This happens because of poor or insufficient brushing. The dirt has accumulated and cannot be removed by brushing. It has come to the point that the dentist must be the one to remove it."

There is another remedy to gingivitis, and one that could also act as a preventive measure. In short, it can help arrest gingivitis that is already existing or stop it from happening in the first place. The good news is this remedy that could save those shiny white teeth is within the reach of the common man.

Gumtect, a gum formula toothpaste created by the Lamoiyan Corporation, costs less than an average fast food lunch.

It is also quite easy to administer. For all intents and purposes, it is used like regular toothpaste. Only that it is packed with more ingredients designed to protect the teeth and gums.

The first ingredient, Allantoin, is therapeutic on skin tissues and wound healing. It stimulates healthy tissue formulation. Dr. Dolatre describes Allantoin as "a self-proliferating agent that speeds up the natural process of the body and stimulates the creation of new tissues."

The second ingredient, Vitamin E, contains anti-inflammatory as well as wound healing properties. It increases gum blood microcirculation to ensure healthy gums and teeth. Dr. Dolatre describes Vitamin E as a "moisturizing agent that insures healthy teeth and smoothens damaged tissue."

Finally, Triclosan is an effective anti-bacterial agent which controls formation of dental plaques and gingival inflammation. Dr. Dolatre believes that it is the most important of the three elements because it is "anti-bacteria and anti-plaque formation."

Healthy teeth are essential to our enjoyment of life. They guard the substances that enter our mouth and enter our body, digest the food that powers us up, and with the help of a sparkling smile, can make others give us a second look. Vitality and beauty – that's what they can give us. With an easy-to-use, affordable solution like Gumtect, dental health is brought a step closer to Filipinos.

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- **It's summit or bust for Pinoy climbers** /A30

RP Pool A cagers rip Iran

By June Navarro

RANGED against a one-dimensional team, the versatile San Mig Cafe-Philippine team A whipped the Iranian national squad, 79-60, last night in the PBA RP Invitational Challenge at the Araneta Coliseum.

After Aydin Kabir opened the game with a three-pointer, the Nationals took over, drilling in triples, pulling down huge rebounds and running the floor like a well-oiled machine.

And it was only the first time the members of the national pool got together.

"We hardly had complete attendance in practice but except for the turnovers, the team got along pretty well," said national head coach Chot Reyes.

"But the most important thing for me was the effort of the players. We have a group of guys who are talented but we also have guys who did the dirty work," added Reyes.

Fil-American Kelly Williams, a 6-foot-5 Detroit-born swingman, was all hustle in defense while sharing a piece of his athleticism to a team formed only three months ago.

Williams paced the Nationals with 15 points and nine rebounds, including a pair of triples that helped the RP squad build a 46-24 bulge midway in the second quarter.

"I've always known the caliber of Williams. He's an energetic player but one thing I like about him is his ability to come off the bench and energize the whole team," said Reyes.

Danny Seigle chipped in 13 points while Yancy De Ocampo and Dondon Hontiveros added 11 points each for the squad that played as San Mig Cafe-RP Team A.

The San Mig Cafe-RP Team B featuring Eric Menk, Mark Caguioa and Jimmy Alapag tackles the visitors today.

Meanwhile, Reyes said he would rather have the RP team see action in the Stankovic Cup than the Jones Cup slated in Taipei at the end of July.

"But joining that tournament is strictly by-invitation only and unfortunately, this year, we're not among the countries which were invited," said Reyes.

Qatar trounced China for the title during the inaugural season of the Stankovic Cup last year.

The scores:

SAN MIG CAFE RP 79—Williams 15, Seigle 13, de Ocampo 11, Hontiveros 11, Ritualo 8, Miller 7, Raymundo 6, Thoss 4, Cortez 2, Adducul 2.

IRAN 60—Amini 18, Kabir 13, Tabeshnia 12, Dorgahi 4, Khabazan 4, Shahsavand 4, Baheran 3, Bordbar 2, Monavari 0.

Quarterscores: 23-11, 51-35, 60-46, 79-60

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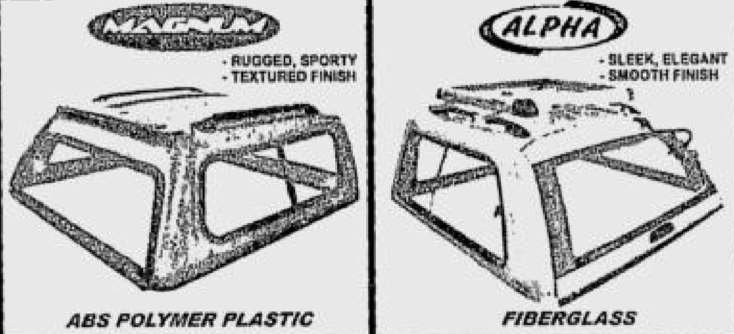

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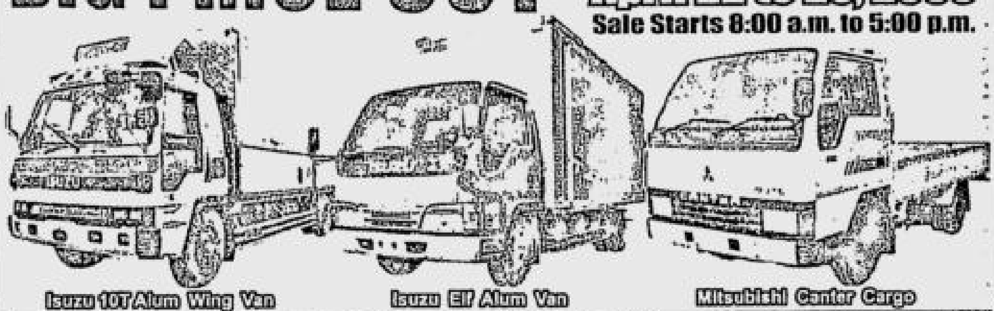

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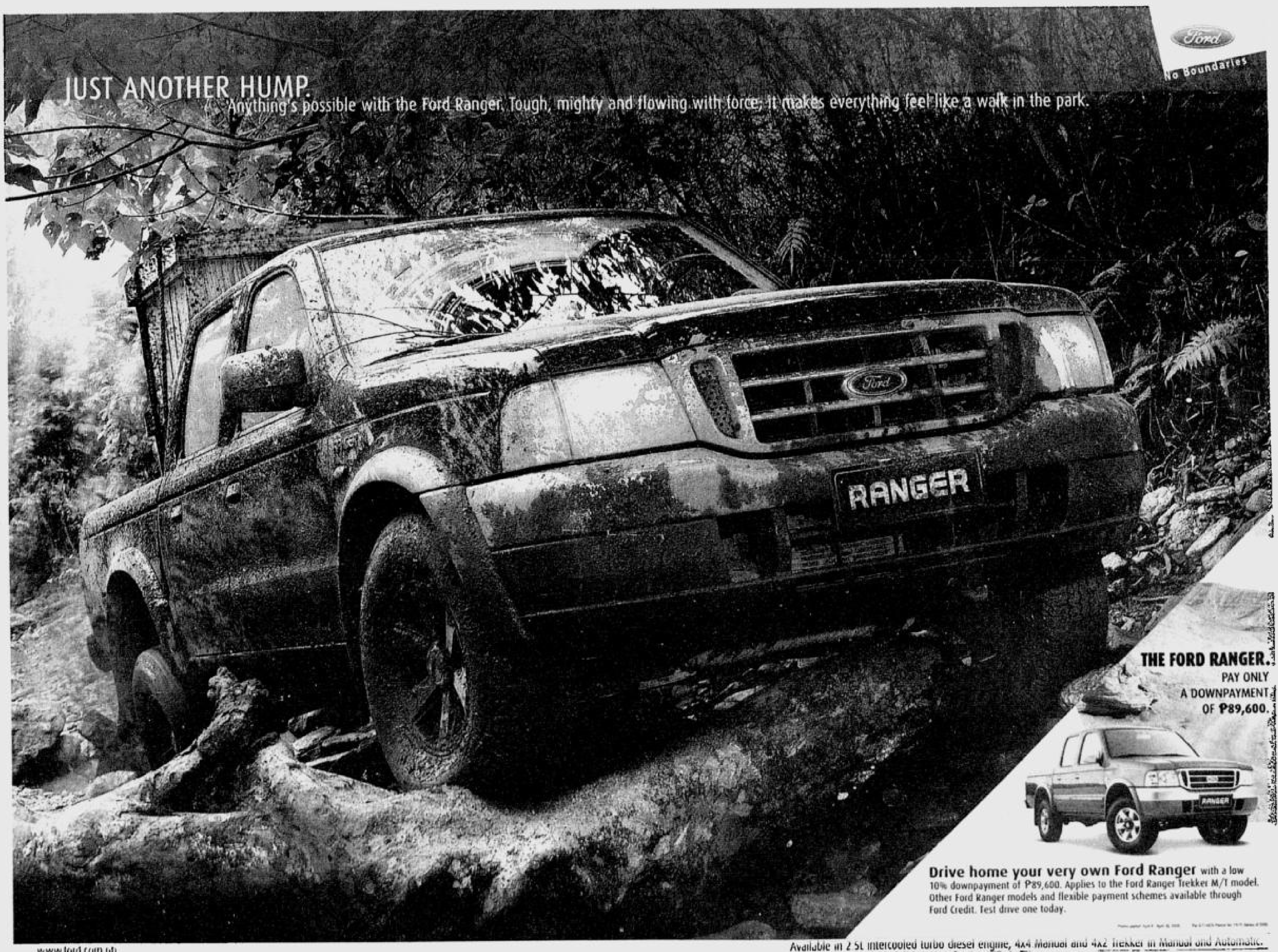

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Guard Baguion Montaña's Mr. Clutch

By Jasmine W. Payo

OVERSHADOWED by Montaña teammates Alex Compton and Jon Dan Salvador, pint-sized Froilan Baguion usually goes by unnoticed in the PBL Unity Cup.

But when the 5-foot-7 playmaker buried two game-winning baskets in a row, everyone remembered how good he is.

"Froilan knows when I need him," said coach Robert Sison of Baguion, who was named as the league's Player of the Week. "He's an impact player. He knows what to do especially during crucial times."

Last Tuesday, Baguion buried a dramatic winning jumper with only a second remaining. Tied at 86-86, he received a midcourt pass from Compton and raced down court to hit the game-clinching basket for an 88-86 overtime triumph against Welcoat Paints.

Four days later, the shortest player in the league again showed resolved at crunch time. With the game knotted at 72-72, Baguion drove through traffic for the game-winning layup with 9.1 seconds left, lifting the Jewels past Toyota Otis-Letran, 74-72.

With Baguion's heroics, the PBL Open champions remain as the only undefeated team in five games.

"He's a miracle guy," said Sison of the former National University standout.

"He bailed us out in the last two games. He's so brave and he can deliver when the going gets tough."

But Sison stressed that Baguion knows his duties in the team. With the Jewels' numerous offensive weapons, Baguion, in fact, welcomes his point guard role.

"He's not really an offensive player but his leadership is a big factor on court," said Sison.

"He knows how to call the shots inside the court. He can easily relay my instructions. He's my extension on the court."

LADIES FED LEAGUE

Sta. Elena, Tagaytay forge duel

STA. ELENA and Tagaytay Highlands forged a showdown for the inaugural Ladies Federation League championship after beating their semifinal opponents in contrasting styles over the weekend.

Olive Reyes and Angie Co came to the rescue for Sta. Elena, clinching the decisive point by winning their aggregate duel with the Manila Southwoods duo of Claire Ong and Marissa Sison, who conceded after going 4-down with four holes left.

The final score was 4-2 as second seed Sta. Elena, ably captained by Cora Suntay, needed just a draw in their away match with the No. 3 ranked Southwoods after completing a 3-0 sweep at home two days earlier.

Southwoods went down fighting, with Connie Campos-Cynthia Heusaff taking the alternate shots point and Claudine Garcia-Florence Okiyama winning the high-low duel.

In contrast, fourth-ranked Tagaytay Highlands, which had a 3-0 lead going to its home game against top seed Orchard, gave the needed half-point to its returning captain Sandy Prieto-Romualdez the quickest possible way.

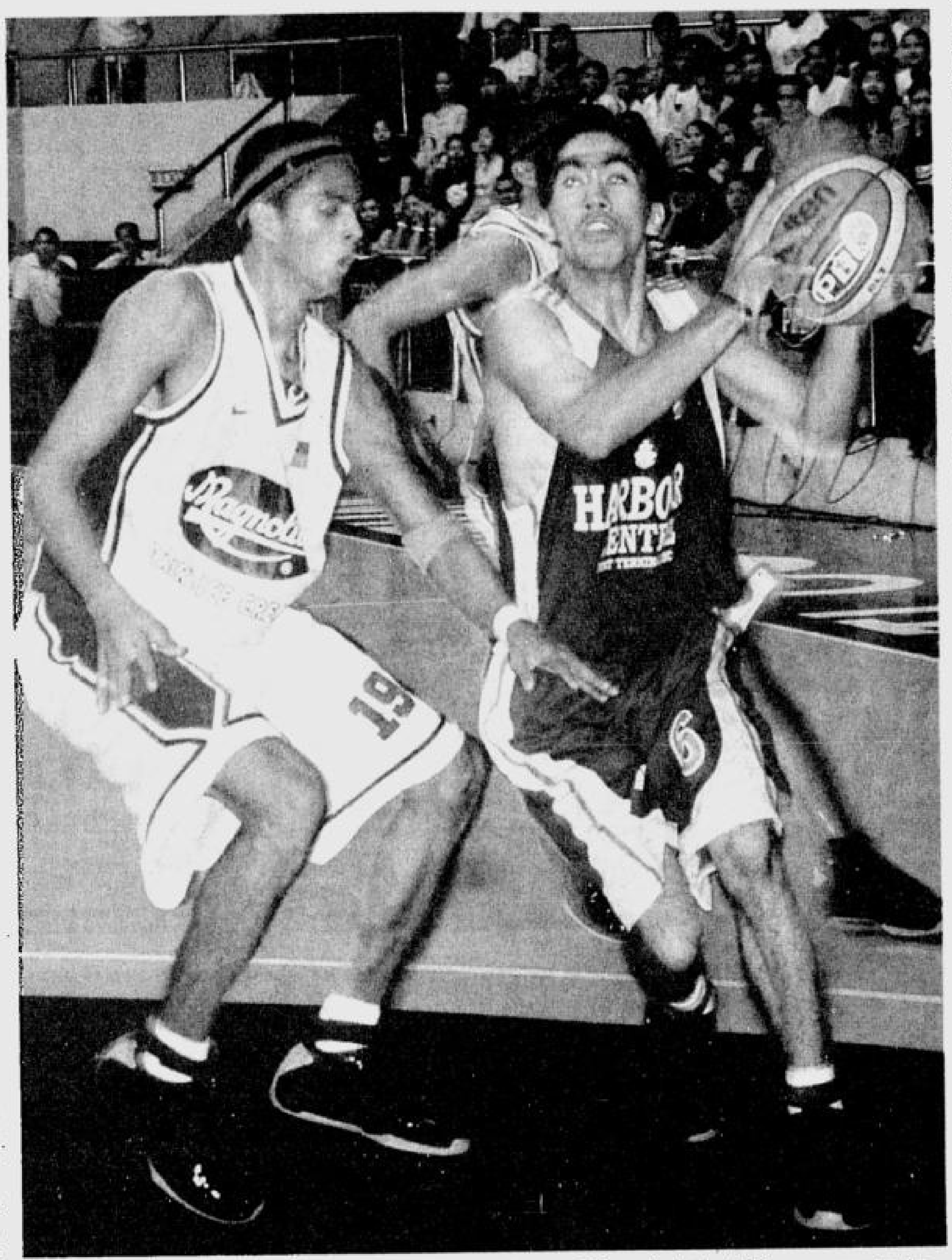
Marilen Yaptangco and Veronica Veloso got the job done early as they finished off Finina Gorres and Valerie Kerr in the alternate shots on the 13th hole.

The ensuing games pitting Linnel de Villa-Asuncion Vergara versus Jo Barredo-Minja Ivanovic in high-low and Maline Flores-Princess Katigbak against Medy Agustin-Makiko Okuno were waived with the final outcome already settled.

The title match is set April 28-29 with Sta. Elena opting to host the first day.

It will be an interesting duel pitting a veteran-laced lineup of Sta. Elena against an unpredictable Tagaytay side reinforced by two jungolfers, sisters Debbie and Linnel de Villa.

The League organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, Inc. is sponsored by Prudential Bank, Justine Sebastian/Cathay Land, Inc., Citibank NA and Schering Plough-Coppertone.



LA TENORIO of Harbour Centre drives against Arwyn Santos of Magnolia in their PBL game won by the Portmasters Saturday. RAFFY LERMA

Magnaye, Legaspi lead way to semis

PETER Magnaye and Bianca Legaspi continued to dominate the JVC Badminton Open Juniors Championships, trouncing separate foes in straight sets to advance to the semifinal round of their respective divisions in the 14-under division at SM Marilao over the weekend.

Magnaye, the defending champion, held off Jed Perez of Bulacan, 15-5, 15-9, to arrange a semis duel with JP Babad of Battledore, who downed Bulacan's Roden Rivera, 15-3, 15-8.

The other semis match in the boys side pits Randolph Balatbat against Paul Vivas.

Balatbat struggled past Ramon Guerrero while Vivas rallied from a first set loss for a 15-7, 15-7, 15-4 victory.

Legaspi, on the other hand, primed up for her keenly-awaited match with Gelita Castillo by thumping Jessalam Sampurna, 11-1, 11-0, to lead the semifinalists in the girls' side of the event sponsored by JVC and SM Supermalls.

Castillo was equally impressive in her 11-1, 11-3 demolition of Kiara Castelo, while Abigael Garcia and Danica Bolos took the two other semis berths by beating their respective rivals, May Pamorada, 11-2, 11-4, and Pia Fabros, 11-8, 11-0.

Legaspi and Garcia teamed up later and bundled out Kimberly dela Cruz and Jaimee Calacday, 15-6, 15-0, to barge into the semis of the girls' doubles of the tournament backed by Gosen, Alaska, Kenny Rogers, Epson, Pioneer Life, Chris Sports, Lactacyd, PowerSmash, Crystal Water, The STAR, PinoyExchange.com, Akari and Accel, the official outfitter of the tournament.

They will face the Villarin siblings—Ma. Luisa and Ma. Paula—who scored a walkover win over the pair of Camille Yang and Kristine Cornista, while Castillo and partner Marie Espino pulled off a 15-4, 15-0 rout of Zairee Mutia and Kiara Castelo to set up a semis clash with Ma. Lourdes Gaspar and Keeshalane Theodosis, who beat Alexandra Villarin and Pia Fabros, 15-2, 15-0.

Ladies provide sidelight to TM billiards tilt

TONI Ann Nobleza hopes to sparkle before her home crowd today as Team Cavite hosts Manila in the TM 9-Ball Champions League at the SM Supermall in Dasmariñas.

But Nobleza expects rough sailing from another lady cue artist, Ruby Merces, who is touted as one of the top players in this event organized by Rocketman Enterprises Inc. and backed by Touch Mobile, Brunswick and Accel.

Merces led the Manila squad of Ali Atienza to a 5-1 victory over Pangasinan at the jampacked SM Supermall activity area in Batangas City last Monday.

Her anticipated showdown with Nobleza, who shone for Team Cavite of Gov. Ayong Maliksi in a 5-2 victory over the Pasig squad of Rep. Dodot Jaworski, is expected to highlight the IBC 13 telecast of the TM 9-Ball Ang Bagong Sibol program that premiers at 9 p.m. on April 28.

The television program, which airs every Monday from 9:30-10:30 p.m., will also have a trick shot and instructional segment.

The Touch Mobile event is a doubles competition where only men players are allowed to break. Matches start at 1 p.m.

Pampanga, a 5-3 winner over Makati on the first day, takes on Pasig this time, while Batangas and Makati square off in a battle of opening-day losers.

Organizers Ramon Tuason and Touch Mobile brand manager Norman Miranda will also be on the lookout for players who value team play, sportsmanship and excellent work ethic for the TM (Taco Master) Kid award, a side event of the TM 9-Ball Champions League.

Melvin Lazaro of Batangas City leads all Taco Masters with 25 points, a point ahead of closest pursuer Jundel Mason of Team Cavite. Allan Soliman of Team Pampanga is currently third with 22 points.

ANTHONY Arevalo and sister Abegail focus on another trip to San Diego.

Arevalos chasing World Jungolf berths again

WHILE most kids their age are occupied with gameboys and Barbie dolls every summer, Anthony and Abegail Arevalo are turning in time in the fairways and driving ranges preparing for the Junior World golf championships.

Waking up early and devoting practically the entire day to hitting balls and getting instructions from their dad, Anthony and Abegail are slowly realizing the fruits of their efforts after placing prominently in the first half of the qualifying series for San Diego.

"They want another shot, because they came so close last year," said father Tony. "The good thing about these kids is that I never had to drive them to practice hard."

"They know what they want and going to practice is already in their system," added Tony. "I didn't have to push them."

The 8-year-old Anthony is campaigning in Class E, restricted to players 8 years old and under, while Abegail is in Class F, the division for players 6 and younger.

Abegail leads as qualifying enters its final half today, while Anthony trails AR Ramos by 12 shots in second place, six ahead of Miggy Yee.

Abegail takes a nine-stroke lead over Janella Buen in the fourth round today.

New picture: Tragic Pacquiao emerging

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

WE WILL never lose this terrific picture of Manny Pacquiao, his face a mask of blood and pain, slugging it out half-blind in the 12th and final round against Erik Morales.

This is the photo we will be showing kids of future generations when they ask what type of a hero Pacquiao was.

Pacquiao was a real warrior.

He may not be as skillful, not as foxy as Flash Elorde.

But those in a position to vote could always point to his big fighting heart when they try to line up Pacquiao with Elorde in the unofficial race for all-time greatness.

***

Elorde, a former bootblack, reigned as world 130-lb. champion for seven and a half years.

Pacquiao has had brief stints as world flyweight king and world junior featherweight champ.

He was often crude compared to other luminaries as far as the sweet science of boxing was concerned.

But riding on a killer left punch and a relentless offensive, he lifted Filipino pride to a record high when he upset and stopped Mexican legend Marco Antonio Barrera in the 11th round in Texas in 2003.

Pacquiao next missed a clear shot at instant immortality when he lost to Morales in their classic encounter in Las Vegas last March.

***

For the record, Pacquiao, pegged the favorite, was clearly outboxed by the more skillful Morales, who came in at his best against the Filipino ring idol.

To this day, it could not be soundly explained how Morales, who had never been stopped in 49 fights, having lost only two bouts by close decision, was hardly given a chance against Pacquiao in their showdown in Las Vegas.

If it's any consolation, it could be said that Pacquiao, despite losing clearly on points, was never outfought.

In fact, there continued to be a clamor for a Morales-Pacquiao rematch; although the Mexican ring great had said he planned to move up in weight.

***

Looking back, there are experts who now say Pacquiao could've left much of his power and skills in the training gym.

It's their cute way of swearing Pacquiao had obviously overtrained. ("*Naiwanan sa gym ang galing.*")

Pacquiao himself had admitted he had lacked the necessary shifts and movements, mainly in the lateral area.

In a fight wherein the requirement for victory was for Pacquiao to surpass himself, he proved predictable, tentative and often hollow.

He also had to do a lot of talking in the prefight, unlike Morales' who stayed focused, mysteriously quiet in his camp up the Mexican mountains.

***

All told, other than skills and preparation, the showdown against Marquez was also decided (and won) with deeper character.

Now looms a sorry post-fight scenario for Pacquiao, who had left the ring against Marquez with his head held high.

A tragic, pitiful picture of Pacquiao has started to emerge following the post-fight skirmishes he has had to wage against those managing his finances.

It's become clear that he's being subjected to bigger cruelty.

Pacquiao continued to swear he had been cheated of deserved earnings.

***

Meanwhile, the very people who had chartered Pacquiao to superstardom were also subjecting him to shameless brutality.

What Pacquiao's business manager, Rod Nazario, had made public, in a bid to protect his turf and honor, was both alarming and lamentable.

Said Nazario: "*Pumasok sa pyramid scam. Pati jueteng gusto pasukin. Huwag, sabi ko illegal 'yan... Pumasok din yata. But after a few weeks, siya na ang may utang.*"

Pacquiao, for his part, has reportedly set aside a hefty sum for the services of a famous American lawyer to pursue his case against Murad Muhammad, his US promoter.

A long, devastating fight is predicted for Pacquiao outside the boxing ring.

We will never lose this great picture of a bloodied but deathly determined Manny Pacquiao in that showdown against Erik Morales.

But there's also this new, tragic photo of him emerging. It's both ugly and shameful.

AUBC caging scheduled in Dumaguete

NEGROS Oriental will host another prestigious international event, the Asian Universities Basketball Championship (AUBC), set June 12-18 in Dumaguete City featuring five foreign teams and three top local squads.

Details of the tournament were finalized during a recent meeting between BAP secretary General Graham Lim and the AUBC organizing committee led by Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz and co-chair Glenda Descuatan.

Also in the meeting were Negros Oriental Vice Gov. Jose "Petit" Baldaldo, Provincial General Services Officer Pempo Martinez, Provincial Administrator Marilou Kho, Provincial Accountant Teddy Reyes, Provincial Sports Coordinator Buddy Ravello, and Tonette Erames of the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

"It is just a fitting follow-up to the successful hosting of the National Students Basketball Championship. This event is part of the Memorandum of Agreement with Governor Arnaiz to boost sports development and the tourism industry of the said province," said Lim.

The foreign field is made up of South Korea, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Thailand.

The Philippines will be represented by the top three teams of the National Students Basketball Championships—University of Perpetual Help-Dalta System, Philippine Maritime Institute and National University.

The AUBC is an annual event of the Asian Universities Basketball Federation where Lim is the concurrent chair. FIBA president Carl Menky Ching was designated the honorary chair with South Korean basketball legend Shin Dong-pa, China's Lu Lian Jie, Indonesia's Ekodjatmiko Sukarso, Thailand's Dr. Pratoom and Chinese Taipei's Wang Jen-sen as board members.

P'que Jets slip past Spring

FORMER Red Bull player Rollie Basilides sank a triple in the last two seconds to power the Parañaque Jets past the Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring, 68-67, Saturday in the exciting opener of the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro led throughout and appeared set to win until Basilides knocked in the game-winning triple—his fourth for the day.

PSC commissioner Joey Mundo graced the opening ceremony.

Down by seven, 60-67, going into the last two minutes, the Jets rallied to provide a fitting gift to Vice Mayor and actor/TV host Anjo Yllana, who celebrated his birthday Saturday.

NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla makes the ceremonial toss between Laguna Spring's Chris Corbin (left) and Parañaque's Randy Lopez. Also in picture are Panasonic Phils. president Rodolfo Perez and NBC chair Louie Kierulf.

Only one TV performer—Antonio Aquitania—suited up for the Jets while Richard Gomez sat on the bench in street clothes.

The Jets, who shocked the RP-Cebuana Lhuillier national training team two weeks ago, drew loud cheers from the big crowd which watched the opening of the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Cebu Pacific, Philtranco, Accel, Molten, Sunbolt, Nature's Spring, Far Eastern Insurance, Skygo Motorcycles, Prime Channel, Ping Ping Lechon, Bayview Park Hotel and Holiday Plaza-Cebu.

Action in the BAP-sanctioned event resumes on April 30 with the southern division opening pitting Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Iligan Crusaders against the Cagayan de Oro Stars of former Misamis Oriental Gov. Antonio Calingin at the Xavier University gym in CdO.

The scores:

Parañaque 68—Basilides 18, Araman 12, Codamon 7, Tolentino 6, Lopez 5, Marquez 4, Bognot 3, Rodriguez 3, Saquilayan 3, Sese 3, Alminario 2, Yambao 2, Gulyab 0, Aquitania 0, Ruiz 0.

Laguna 67—Manuel 18, Reyes 11, Domingo 10, Manucat 9, Corbin 8, Proceso 5, Kalaw 2, Nuqui 2, Mendoza 1, Mallari 1, Vivero 0, Nolasco 0, Lingal 0, Roda 0, Alejar 0.

Quarters: 18-24, 39-42, 47-54, 68-67.

Zamboanga judokas bag 3 golds

CEBU CITY—Powered by members of the national team, Zamboanga dominated the opening day of the Philippine National Individual Judo Championships, winning three of the eight gold medals staked Friday at the University of San Carlos Gymnasium here.

National players Franco Teves, Daniel Pedro and Aristotle Lucero topped their respective weight categories for Zamboanga, which also won two silvers and five bronzes at the start of the three-day tournament that serves as a qualifying event for the coming Southeast Asian Games.

Teves, bronze medalist in the 2003 Vietnam SEA Games, defeated Zamboanga teammate and fellow national Oliver Franco in the final of the men's 55 kg-below category. Taking the bronze medals were Davao's Garry Sardoncillo and University of Baguio's Anthony Daw.

Pedro, Vietnam SEAG bronze winner and silver medalist in the recent Hongkong Invitational, beat Jones Lanuza of Muntinlupa in the men's 60 kg class. Dempsey Depayso of Baguio and Ricky Palancos of Davao settled for the bronze medals.

Zamboanga's third gold came from the men's 66 kg class courtesy of Lucero, Vietnam SEA Games silver medalist, who stopped GEN Gentleway's Lloyd Llamas in the final. The bronzes went to Samson Bernales of De La Salle University and Randy Gambong of Davao.

The other RP team members who took gold medals were City College of Manila's Gilbert Ramirez who topped the men's 73 kg class; Muntinlupa's Esli Gay Liwanen, who dominated the women's 63 kg; Solomon, winner of the women's 70 kg, and Davao's Ruth Dugaduga (women's 78 kg).

Alien Relampagos of Davao took the gold in the men's 100 kg-and-above category where there was no participant from the RP team.

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SPORTSWATCH

2nd Pasay Mayor's Cup

THE SECOND Pasay City Mayor's Cup, an annual golfing event for the benefit of needy residents, will enjoy the support of big companies headed by principal sponsor San Miguel Corp. The major sponsors are Columbia Airfreight, SM Prime Holdings, Federal Land, Teletech and Mirant Pagbilao with Philtranco, The Grand Plaza Hotel/The Heritage Hotel Manila, Sonlie International, Solar Entertainment and Amazing Theater as minor backers. Also supporting the event set April 29 at the Villamor Golf Club course are Networld Hotel, The Copacobana, Taletrak, Royal Star Aviation and Ralph's Wines.

Cojuangco at PSA Forum

THE WEEKLY PSA Forum will have no less than Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Jose Cojuangco as special guest in tomorrow's session at the Manila Pavilion. The former Tarlac congressman is expected to tackle the latest issues and matters concerning local sports, from the controversy surrounding the country's amateur basketball to the coming Southeast Asian Games. To join Cojuangco in the public sports program sponsored by Red Bull, Supermax, Circure, Pagcor and aired live over DZSR Sports Radio is Table Tennis Association of the Philippines (Tatap) president Victor Valbuena.

LEAD camp set May 12-14

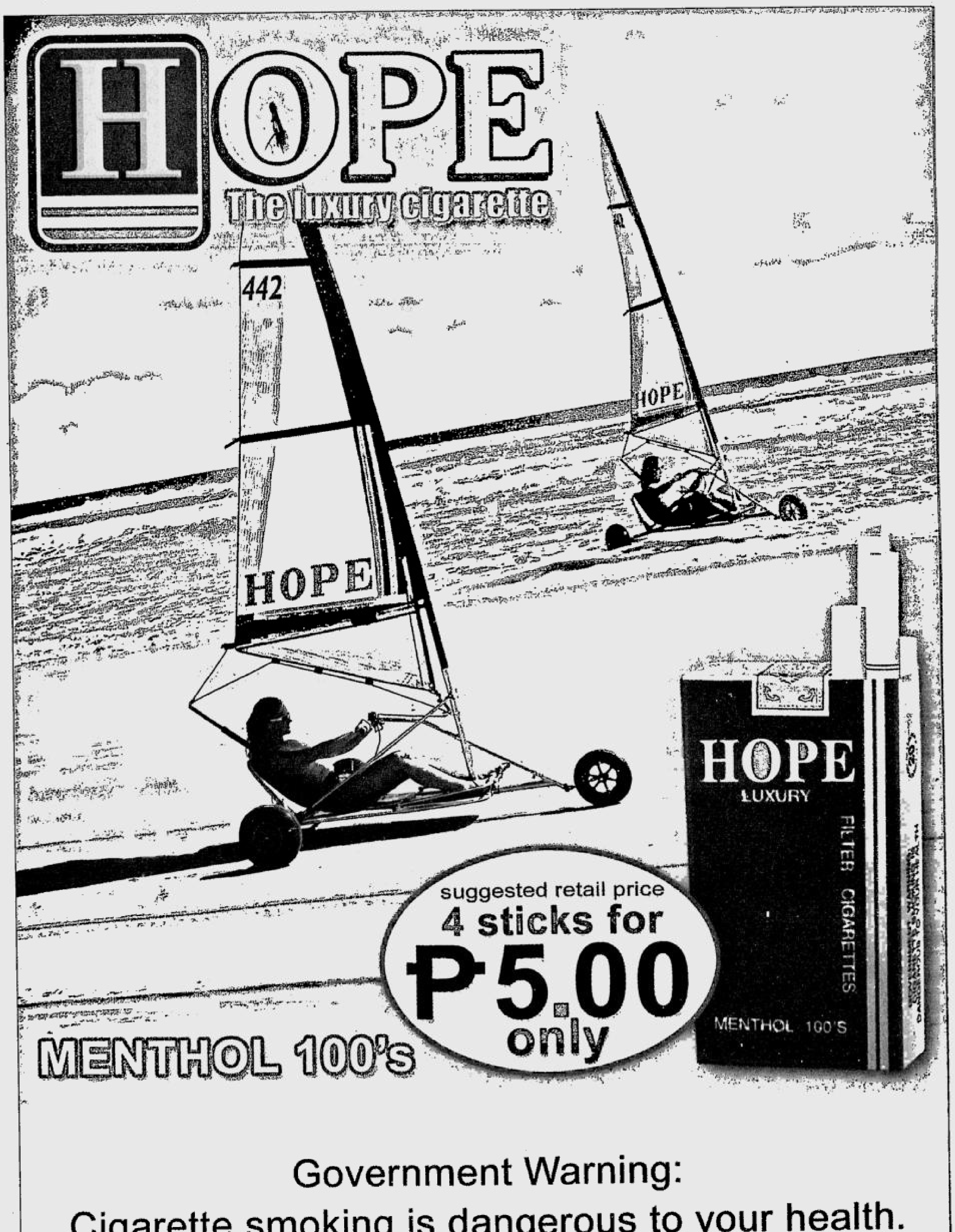
PHILIPPINE Basketball Association (PBA) coaches Eric Altamirano and Ronnie Magsanoc along with Montana player Alex Compton and Pastor Paolo Punzalan are the featured speakers in the International Basketball Academy's LEAD camp set May 12 to 14 at the Caliraya Re-Creation Center in Lumban, Laguna. LEAD Camp is not only open to Coach E Basketball School participants but also kids who want to learn the values of leadership, excellence, attitude and discipline. Interested parties may contact the IBA at 631-1195, 09217562639 (look for Marissa) or e-mail at iba_phil@yahoo.com for registration to the LEAD camp and the upcoming Coach E Basketball School classes set April 26 and May 2.

Ratratan finals today

UPCOMING cockers and breeders from different cockpits converge today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit for the championship round of the "P1 Million Ratratan 4-Cock Derby" starting at 5 p.m., with more than 70 fights lined up. Competing today are participants with two wins each after the eliminations held at Gumaca Cockpit, Triangle Cockpit Batangas, Liliw Coliseum, Bustos Cockpit, Darasa Cockpit, Meycauayan Cockpit, Baliwag Circle Cockpit, Lipa Games and Sports Center among others. Likewise, 12 new participants will field four cocks each today. Meanwhile, the much-awaited "Mitra Cup 4-Cock Derby" finally unfolds on Wednesday, April 27, with no less than 60 fights scheduled. Interested parties may call 833-2275 and 833-1638.

GCAP 7-cock derby up

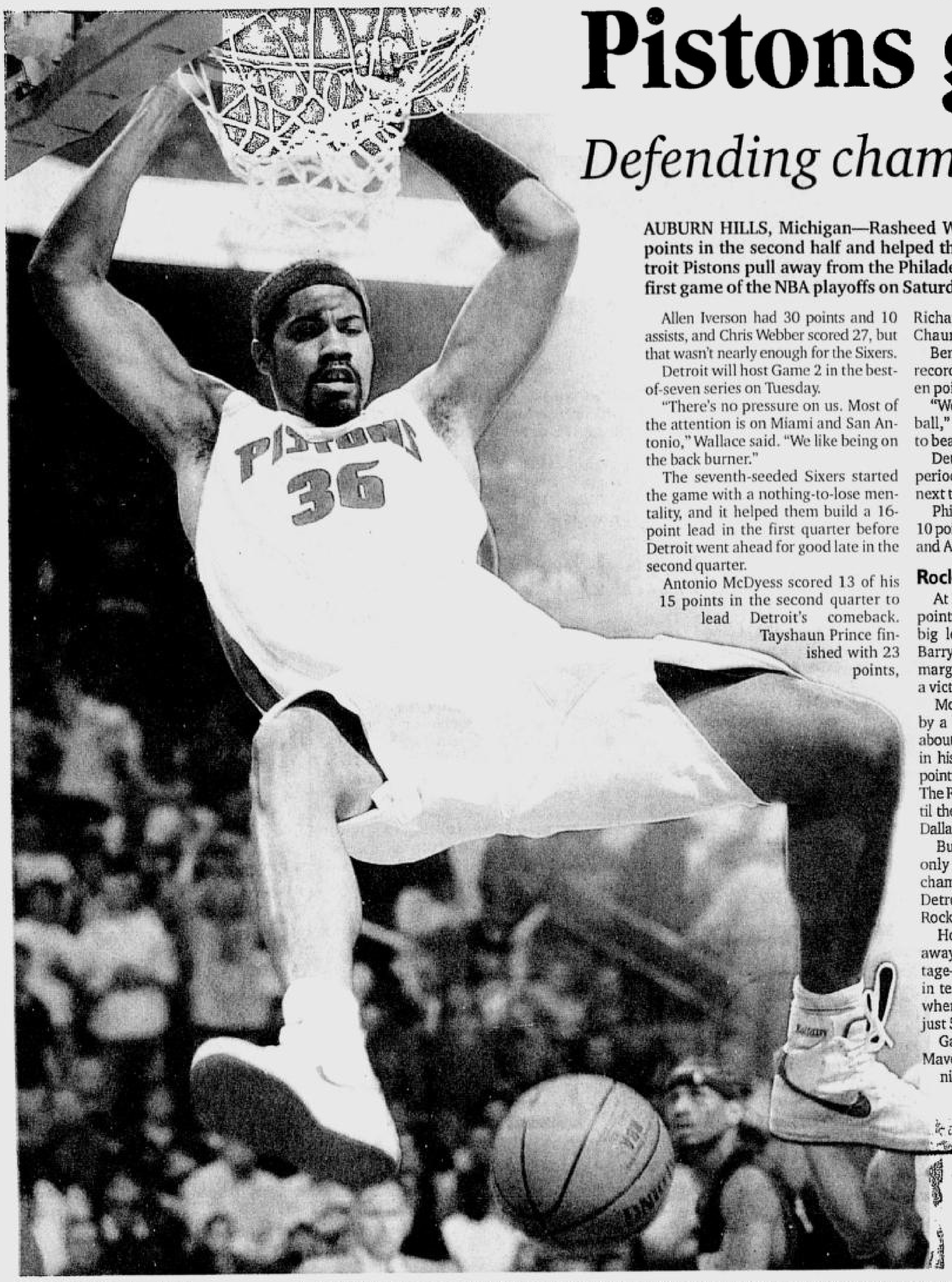
BIGTIME cockfighting resumes at the fully air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum tonight when the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 7-Cock Derby gets going at 7 p.m. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Participants are expected to field their multi-winners since only three derbies are left before the first ever GCAP Cocker of the Year is finally known. Gerry Ramos of Las Piñas is the current leader with his entry Against All Odds leading with 27.5 points. Tailing him are Benjie Lim (Burahod Nim Kauswagan, 25), Dinin Cuenca and Dante Hinlo (24.5), *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio (Complexor 3000, 23.5), Lim (Love U Papa, 23.5), William Go and Company (JU AS WG Listana, 23.5). Slated today is the 30-cock elimination round, while the championship is on Wednesday. For other inquiries, please contact 874-3910 and 873-1040.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Pistons grab playof

Defending champs rip 76ers; Celtics, R



DETROIT'S Rasheed Wallace scores on a dunk to highlight a second-half explosion that helped the Pistons crush the Philadelphia 76ers. REUTERS

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Rasheed Wallace scored 24 of his 29 points in the second half and helped the defending champion Detroit Pistons pull away from the Philadelphia 76ers, 106-85, in the first game of the NBA playoffs on Saturday.

Allen Iverson had 30 points and 10 assists, and Chris Webber scored 27, but that wasn't nearly enough for the Sixers.

Detroit will host Game 2 in the best-of-seven series on Tuesday.

"There's no pressure on us. Most of the attention is on Miami and San Antonio," Wallace said. "We like being on the back burner."

The seventh-seeded Sixers started the game with a nothing-to-lose mentality, and it helped them build a 16-point lead in the first quarter before Detroit went ahead for good late in the second quarter.

Antonio McDyess scored 13 of his 15 points in the second quarter to lead Detroit's comeback. Tayshaun Prince finished with 23 points, Richard Hamilton had 17 and Chauncey Billups added 11.

Ben Wallace tied a Pistons playoff record with seven blocks, and had seven points and 10 rebounds.

"We played one quarter of basketball," Iverson said. "That's not enough to beat nobody."

Detroit followed up a 16-point first period with 32 points in each of the next two quarters.

Philadelphia's Samuel Dalembert had 10 points and a season-high 18 rebounds and Andre Iguodala added 10 points.

Rockets 98, Mavericks 86

At Dallas, Tracy McGrady scored 34 points to build the Houston Rockets a big lead, then Mike James and Jon Barry helped protect the shrinking margin in the final period, preserving a victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

McGrady's early heroics, highlighted by a long 3-pointer with the shot clock about to expire and Dirk Nowitzki's hand in his face, helped Houston take a 19-point lead early in the second quarter. The Rockets were up by double-digits until the closing minutes of the third, then Dallas got within 75-71 with 9:16 left.

But baskets by Barry and James, the only player on either roster with a championship ring, having won with Detroit last season, stretched the Rockets to 84-73 and just 5:52 to play.

Houston's eighth straight win took away Dallas' home-court advantage—and fit nicely with a quirky stat in team history. The Rockets are 17-1 when winning Game 1 of a series and just 5-19 when losing the opener.

Game 2 is on Monday in Dallas. The Mavericks' loss ended a nine-game winning streak and a nine-game home winning streak. It was their first home loss under coach Avery Johnson and just their third in 19 games since he replaced Don Nelson.

ACTION gets physical in the playoffs as India

Celtics 102, Pacers 82

In Boston, Raef LaFrentz set a club playoff record by hitting all five of his 3-pointers and a scrappy Boston rolled over Indiana in their playoff opener.

The Celtics overcame a horrible start in which they missed 12 of their first 13 shots and trailed 12-6. But they hit 20 of their 31 shots the rest of the half and led 57-31 at intermission.

LaFrentz led the Celtics with 21 points and broke the record for 3-

Ward, Koch share Corona golf lead

MORELIA, Mexico—Wendy Ward moved into contention for her second straight LPGA Tour victory, shooting a 4-under 68 for a share of the third-round lead with Sweden's Carin Koch in the Corona Morelia Championship on Saturday.

Ward, a 31-year-old American who won the Takefuji Classic last week in Las Vegas for her first victory in nearly four years, lost the outright lead with a bogey on the 18th. Koch, winless since 2001, shot a 71 to match Ward at 8 under.

Natalie Gulbis was five strokes back after a 72, and Stacy Prammanasudh and Catriona Matthew were tied for fourth at 2 under after 70s.

A sunny morning gave way to dense clouds in the afternoon and officials ordered all players off the Tres Marias Golf Club at 4:49 p.m. because of lightning. Play resumed after a delay of 1 hour, 25 minutes.

Ward said before the round that she will have to keep winning to truly stay happy on tour.

"I'm not satisfied with just being an average player. To finish 31 or 32 on the money list like I did last year, that's an OK year... but I'm a competitor so much on the inside," she said. "The standards I have for myself, I just set them a little bit higher. And it is such a thrill to win and hold up that trophy that every time I do it, I can't wait to do it again."

Mexico's Lorena Ochoa continued to struggle during the second event of the year in her homeland, failing to convert some makable puts in shooting a 76 to finish at 4 over. Fans, many of whom chanted her name, followed Ochoa from hole to hole, even as she struggled.

Ochoa, who won twice last year to become the LPGA Tour's first Mexican-born champion, also was the center of attention in the MasterCard Classic last month outside Mexico City, but failed to challenge winner Annika Sorenstam.

South Korea's Sung Ah Yim aced the 184-yard 13th with a 4-iron. She shot a 73 to finish at even par. *AP*

Scott captures Johnnie Walker Classic

BEIJING—Australia's Adam Scott led from start to finish to claim the Johnnie Walker Classic on Sunday, holding off Retief Goosen to finish 18-under-par.

Goosen, a two-time US Open champion, finished the course at 15-under after shooting a 70 in the final round. He was one stroke off the pace after the 10th hole following bogeys by Scott on the 3rd, 7th, 9th and 10th holes.

But a spectacular birdie on the 153-meter (167-yard) par-3 12th hole and birdies on the 5th, 8th and 13th helped Scott secure the title.

"It wasn't looking so good there at one point, down to one shot and Retief playing very well," Scott said. "At the 12th tee I really struck a beautiful shot there and sealed it off with a birdie. Looking back on it, the 12th hole set me up with a good chance to win."

Goosen fired birdies on the 2nd, 3rd and 8th holes against one bogey on the 6th, then shot 10 straight pars to finish with 70.

"The 11th was probably an important hole for me to make a birdie there and I didn't," Goosen said. "Then I made a bad club selection on the par-5 13th and missed a short one on 15 to get a bit closer but didn't do it." *AP*

Roddick enters 5th straight 'clay' final

HOUSTON—Top-seeded Andy Roddick was broken twice in the first six games Saturday before charging back to dominate Jurgen Melzer of Austria, 6-4, 6-2, and reach his fifth straight final at the US Men's Clay Court Championships.

In Sunday's title match, Roddick will face France's Sebastien Grosjean, who almost stumbled in the second set before rallying at the end for a 6-1, 7-6 (5) victory over Ecuador's Nicolas Lapentti.

Roddick's string of five straight finals is the longest on the ATP tour since Russia's Yvegeny Kafelnikov reached the championship match at Moscow six times between 1996-2001, winning the last five.

"It's a ritual I enjoy and hope to continue," Roddick said.

Roddick was runner-up the past two years and took titles in 2001 and 2002. But it looked as if his string might end after he double-faulted twice in the second game and was broken after three deuces.

He was broken again in the sixth game, winning only one point, and falling behind 2-4.

"It was close, although it was 3-0 and I broke him again and it was 4-2," Melzer said. "I couldn't quite hold serve after that."

Roddick then warmed up to the challenge. He won 12 of the next 13 points over the next three games, breaking Melzer in the seventh and ninth
and served for the set in the 10th.
dick hit a 135-mph ace to reach set
then placed a drop shot that
couldn't get over the net.

Melzer had more trouble in the
set. After he held to open the set,
won only two points in the
games before finally holding aga
seventh.

Last year, Roddick had trouble
down Melzer's drop shots and b
vanced with a 7-5, 7-6 (5) quar
victory. The Austrian wasn't as suc
this time, and Roddick chased dow
of his attempts.

"I was about 0-for-26 last year
hit that drop shot," Roddick said.
definitely something I was lookin
a shot you don't see that much. H
on the first one and then I was al
on them after that and on a coup
points I was looking for it.

"Last year here, he made
stupid all night long with that d
and I didn't want to look as stupi

Roddick, tied for fifth in th
rankings, was one of only tw
players at the clay court champ
Second-seeded Andre Agassi, ra
enth, was beaten by Grosjean in th
terfinals.

Grosjean bewildered Lapen
first set, which lasted just 27 mi

LINDSAY Davenport helps the United States grab a 2-0 start. AFP

Fed Cup: US cruises, France struggle

LONDON—Defending champion Russia and 2004 runner-up France fought back to level their matches 1-1 while Spain and the United States made comfortable starts in the Fed Cup first round on Saturday.

A Russia team without its three reigning Grand Slam champions was tied with Italy, Virginie Razzano stepped in for injured world No. 3 Amelie Mauresmo to save France against Austria, Spain led Argentina, 2-0, and the United States was cruising over a weakened Belgium 2-0.

Without injured French Open champ Anastasia Myskina, and omitted Wimbledon winner Maria Sharapova and US Open champ Svetlana Kuznetsova, Elena Dementieva was recalled by Russia for the first time in two years and helped to prevent the champions from slipping 2-0 behind to Italy in Brindisi.

After Dinara Safina lost on her Fed Cup debut to Italy No. 1 Francesca Schiavone 7-5, 6-3, Dementieva earned a shaky 6-4, 6-3 win over Tathiana Garbin in her first clay match of the season. It featured 13 breaks of serve.

"The match was not simple however, and I made some mistakes. It was my first match on this surface this season," Dementieva said.

At Portschach, Austria, Razzano was a late replacement for Mauresmo, who withdrew with abdominal pains.

Chosen for the doubles on Sunday, Razzano made light work of 14-year-old Austrian student Tamira Paszek, 6-3, 6-3, and consoled a French team stunned by the opening singles loss by world No. 15 Nathalie Dechy.

Dechy was upset by 131st-ranked Yvonne Meusburger, 7-6 (3), 6-2.

If Mauresmo is still not fit for the reverse singles on Sunday, Razzano might have to play Meusburger. France, Fed Cup finalists the past two years, has never lost to Austria in four previous encounters.

At Jerez de la Frontera, Spain's Nuria Llagostera Vives, on debut, and Anabel Medina Garrigues beat Argentin
Dulko and Maria-Emilia Salerni by
6-4, 4-6, 6-3 scores.

"We have three chances to win
and it would indeed be great if w
first opportunity," said Spain capta
Margets.

The only concern for Margets
na Garrigues, who despite kne
wore down Salerni. Medina Ga
due to meet Dulko on Sunday dep
a doctor's examination and pract
morning.

At Delray Beach, Florida,
Lindsay Davenport beat Eveline
6-0, 6-2, in just 39 minutes, th
ranked Venus Williams swept p
ranked Els Callens, 6-2, 6-2, in
gium that was expected to be lops

Belgium was without its tw
stars, Justine Henin-Hardenne an
jsters.

Vanhyfte, looking nervous,
pletely overwhelmed by Davenpo

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f head start

ockets pocket Game 1

na forward Dale Davis (left) hits the face of Boston forward Antoine Walker. AP

nters set by Scott Wedman in Game f the 1985 NBA finals, won by the Angeles Lakers. Gary Payton had points and Antoine Walker and ky Davis added 13 each.

he Pacers were led by Stephen kson's 25 points. Austin Croshere led 10 points, while Reggie Miller, o plans to retire after this season, Jermaine O'Neal had only seven.

oston will host Game 2 Monday.

perSonics 87, Kings 82

n Seattle, Ray Allen scored 28 nts and Seattle center Jerome James added 17 points and a career-high 15 rebounds, leading the SuperSonics past Sacramento in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series.

The Sonics blew a 21-point second-half lead but held on with big baskets in the closing seconds by Allen and James.

Peja Stojakovic led Sacramento with 24 points, and Cuttino Mobley scored 16 of his 22 points in the second half for the Kings.

Rashard Lewis added 18 points for Seattle. Game 2 is Tuesday night in Seattle. *AP*

HOUSTON OPEN

Singh charges back to the top

HUMBLE, Texas—Defending champion Vijay Singh fought off windy conditions and a slow start by shooting a 2-under 70 to join Australia's Gavin Coles at the top of the leaderboard after the Houston Open third round on Saturday.

Singh, a nine-time winner last year who was recently elected to the World Golf Hall of Fame, had three birdies on the back nine to match Coles at 11-under 205 on Redstone Golf Club's Jacobsen-Hardy Course.

Coles, who started the day tied for the lead with Brett Quigley at 10 under, had a 71 as wind gusting over 20 mph (32 kph) kept scores high.

Englishman Greg Owen faltered with bogeys on his last two holes to finish with a 70, leaving him a stroke back at 10 under. Quigley (73) and Jose Maria Olazabal (70) were 9 under, and John Daly (73) topped a three-man group at 8 under.

Singh started the day one shot off the pace and fell as much as five shots behind with bogeys at Nos. 4 and 6, both par-4 holes, then bounced back with birdies at 8 and 10. A birdie at the par-5 12th hole, where his approach landed 3 feet from the pin, pulled him within one of the lead.

Then at the par-5 15th, the 42-year-old Fijian made a 6-foot birdie putt to pull even with Coles and Owen at 11 under. Singh, seeking his third victory in the tournament in four years, finished with three pars.

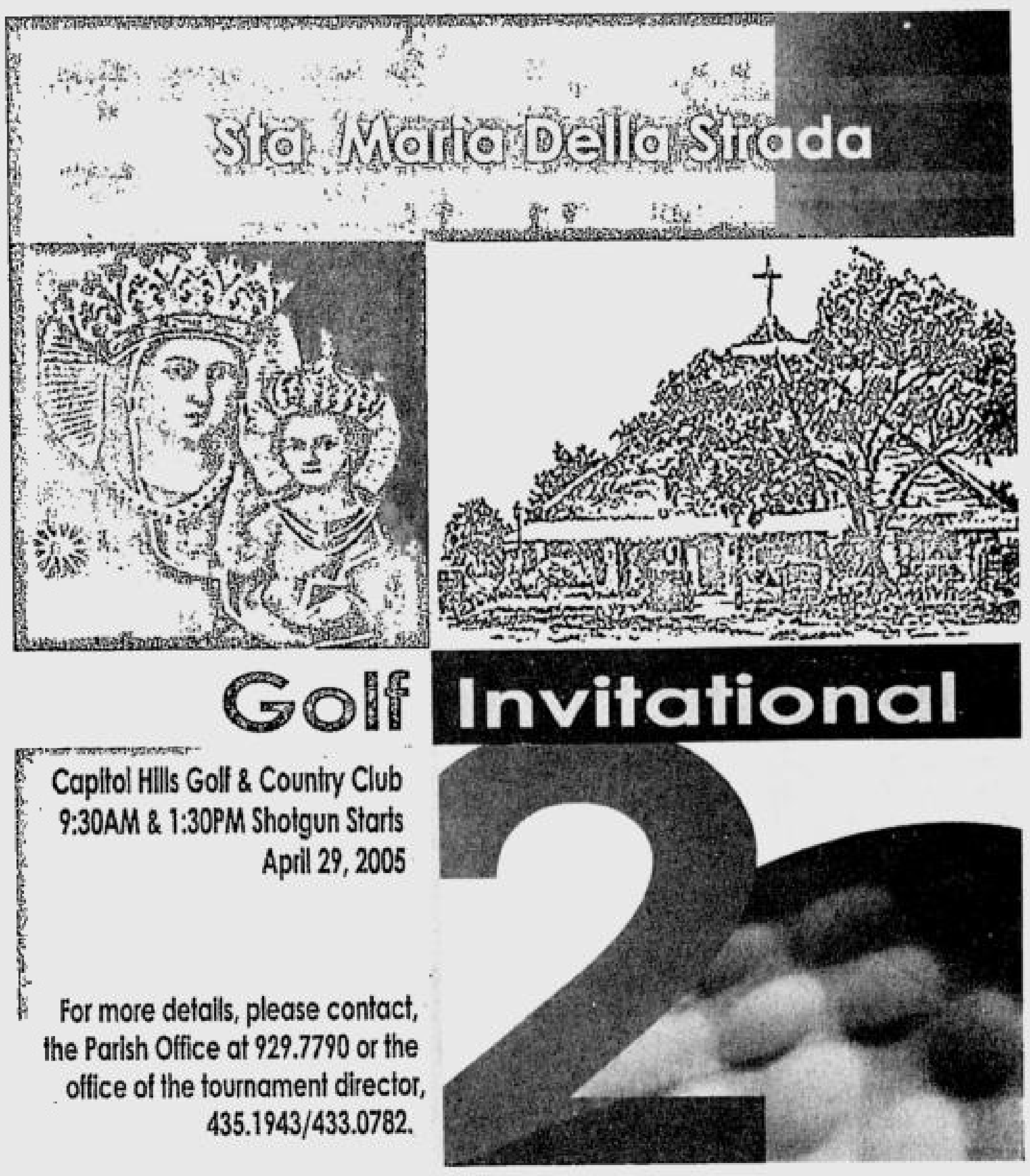
The 36-year-old Coles, who played last year on the minor US Nationwide Tour and is making his second try at the US PGA Tour, had some early stumbles but refused to buckle. He started with a birdie at No. 1 and got to 12 under with another birdie at the par-3 5th hole. Back-to-back bogeys at 7 and 8 sent him back to the pack before he two-putted from 75 feet for birdie at the turn. Then he had nine consecutive pars for his 71.

Owen, who began the day two shots off the pace, was cruising along flawlessly, getting to 12 under and the lead alone until finishing with back-to-back bogeys.

At 17, the 33-year-old Englishman landed in a bunker, then missed a 3-foot par putt. Then at 18, he found the sand again, and missed his putt for par by less than a foot.

Owen is playing in only his 17th tour event stretching back to 1999. He placed third at Pebble Beach in February, his best finish ever. *AP*

DEFENDING champion Vijay Singh blasts out of a sixth-hole bunker. AP



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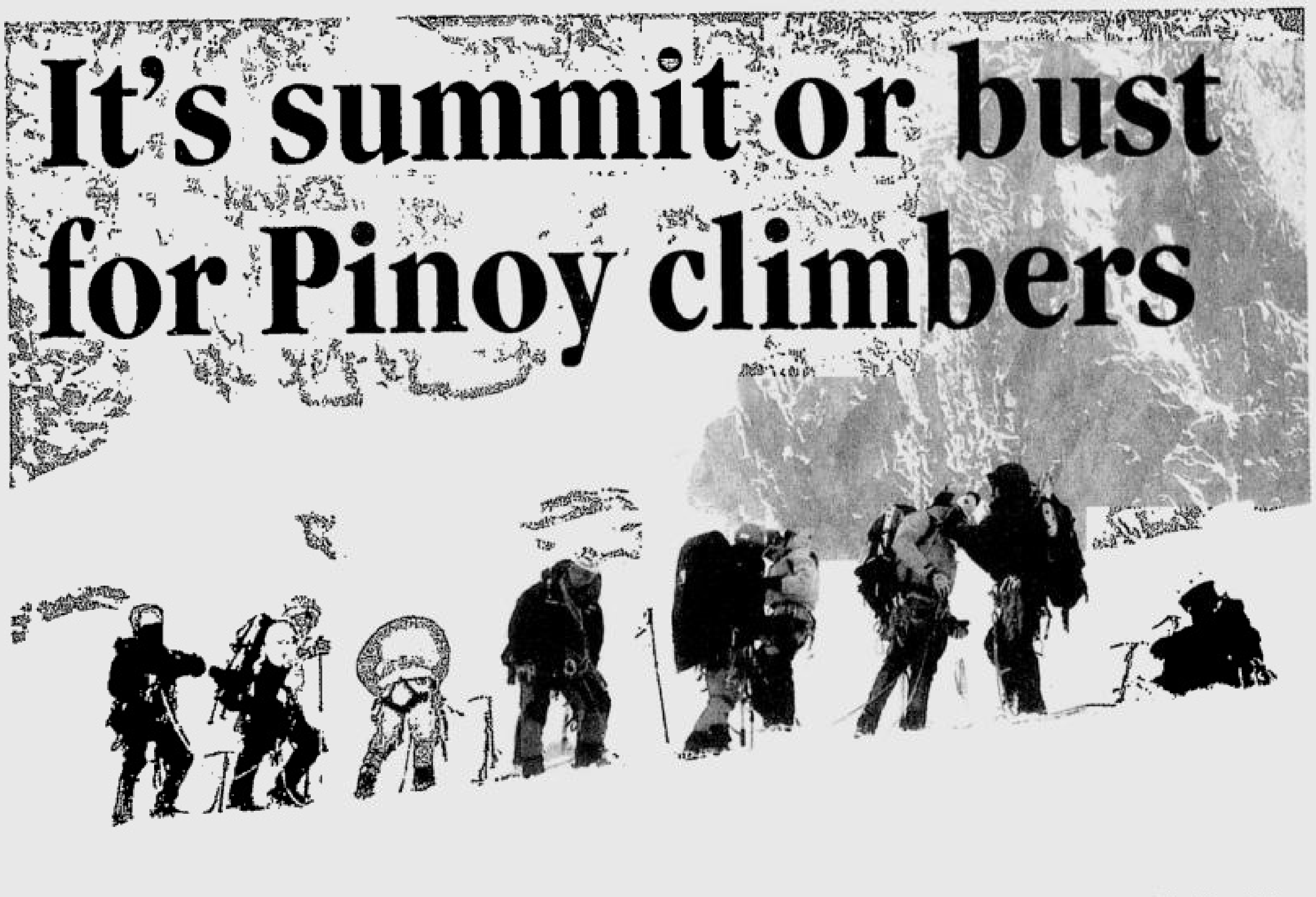
It's summit or bust for Pinoy climbers



HARSH weather. Rough terrain. The world's highest peak. These are only some of the many challenges facing Art Valdez and the North Face-powered Filipino climbers as they attempt to scale mountaineering's Holy Grail—Mt. Everest.

'Ordinary people' eye extraordinary feat

By Jasmine W. Payo

HIS PASSION has always been climbing mountains.

At 56, Art Valdez continues to lead the rigorous training of the first Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition Team that aims to scale the world's highest peak in the summer of 2007.

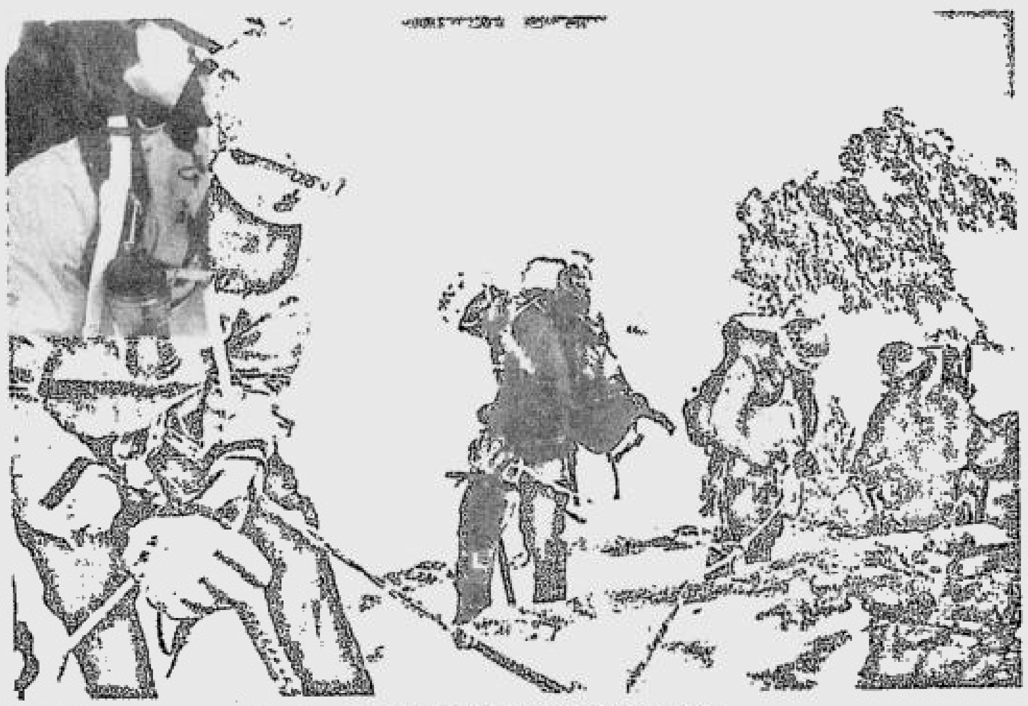
"When we put this thing together, nobody believed us," said Valdez in a press conference yesterday at the North Face outlet in Rockwell, Makati. "But it's been a year since that time. We've already climbed local mountains and trained in India and New Zealand."

"We're just ordinary people trying to do an extraordinary thing," added the former Transportation and Communication undersecretary, the oldest in the 17-member delegation. "We put this together as a way of lifting our spirits and to show the 'can-do' spirit of the Filipino."

The expedition team recently completed a 10-day Technical Mountain Course training in Mt. Cook National Park in New Zealand, where members tackled the 8,550-foot Mt. Aylmer and the Tasman Glacier.

"We've been following our training program religiously and consulting experts on alpine mountaineering," said team spokesman Regie Pablo, citing the group's other training expeditions in Nepal, Pakistan and Myanmar this year.

Noelle Wenceslao, one of three females in the historic attempt, shared the team's grueling preparations.



PROPER equipment will play a vital role in the Everest expedition.

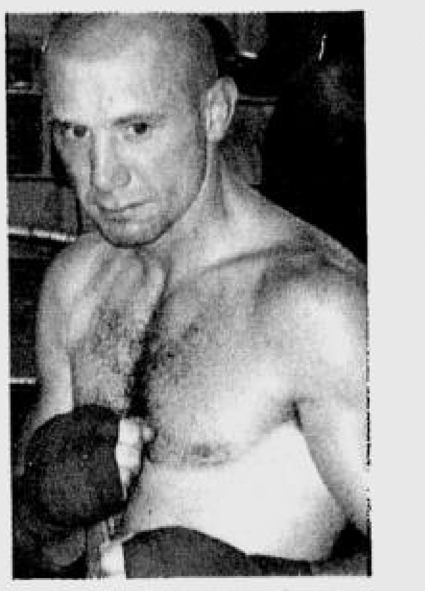
"There was nothing like our experience in India," said Wenceslao. "It was difficult because for the first time, we were exposed to high altitude. The temperature was a big adjustment for us because we're from a tropical country."

Wenceslao, the youngest member at 25, also noted the sacrifices of her teammates.

"Others have to quit their jobs," she said. "But we like what we're doing because this is like the Olympics of mountaineering."

Other members of the expedition team include Butch Sebastian, Fred Jamili, Jong Narciso, Choi Aquino, Erwin Emata, Johnny Boy Anoñuevo, Leo Oracion, Larry Honoridez, Levi Nayangahan, Janet Belarmino, Ariel Ambayec, Karina Dayumdon, Dr. Teofredo Esguera and John Tronco.

Castañares rival due Wednesday



MARKS: Promises a shocker

MANDAUE CITY—World Boxing Foundation junior welterweight champion Dindo "Diesel" Castañares will stake his crown against Australian Steven Marks on Saturday, April 30, at the Mandaue Sports Complex.

Marks, who has a 12-9-2 win-loss-draw record, is arriving this Wednesday accompanied by trainer David Hedgecock and cornerman Bob Jones.

Also coming on the same Singapore Airline afternoon flight are WBF president Mick Croucher, boxing judge Ignatius Missailidis and Ian Spouce.

Promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani is collaborating with the Mandaue Sports Development Commission headed by Cheryl Ouano in presenting the fight.

Croucher, in an earlier interview, said Marks had promised to shock the Cebu boxing fans with a win over Castañares.

Backstopping the international fight are six local bouts headed by a clash between WBA Pan-African champion Bert Batawang against Eugene Gonzales of Manila.

The other bouts pit Donnie Nietes against Elmer Muyco, Cebu-based Boholano Along Denoy against Jun Eraham, Rock n' Rollen del Castillo against Eddie Villegas, Robert Allanic versus Rolando Baclayo, and Jojo Intor versus Jomar Labiogo.

Tickets are available at USA Sports outlets in Ayala and SM malls and at the Mandaue City mayor's office. Prices are P800 for sponsors, P400 for ringside, P300 for lower box and P150 for general admission. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Escol captures Pan-Pacific title

JOEL Escol won the vacant IBF Pan-Pacific junior featherweight title when he scored a come-from-behind sixth-round knockout victory over the formerly undefeated Thai Fahsai Sakkreerin at the Porkungpao Restaurant Complex in Bangkok, Thailand, Friday.

Reports from Thailand said Sakkreerin, egged on by the hometown crowd, controlled the fight in the first four rounds before the Filipino fighter changed tactics and worked on the Thai's weak breadbasket.

Escol, from Manila's Emil Romano Stable, got to Sakkreerin's body in the sixth and the Thai reportedly fell like a log.

"*Kinatawan niya* (The body attack worked)," said Virgi Romano, wife of Escol's manager, Emil Romano.

Escol is expected to barge into the top 15 of the next IBF rankings following the win.

In another fight, IBF No. 3 featherweight Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym scored a third-round knockout over Filipino Ronaldo Mahinay to retain his IBF Pan-Pacific featherweight title.

The southpaw Rakkiatgym, according to Fightnews, "kept the aggressive Mahinay off balance as he continually connected with ramrod-straight right hands in the opening round."

"Rakkiatgym is now the top contender to IBF champion Juan Marquez. We respect Marquez as a very good champion but [we] know Rakkiatgym has superior skills and power. We will defeat Marquez for the championship in 2005," promoter Jimmy Chaichotchuang told Fightnews. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

PhilCycling series of bike clinics set

A SERIES of clinics and orientation seminars on cycling will be conducted by the national federation of the sport, PhilCycling, next month at the Amoranto Velodrome.

PhilCycling has also started to enforce a sanctioning scheme on local races, an endeavor intended to systematize and improve the scheduling of road, mountain bike and velodrome races. The PhilCycling sanctions are in accordance with Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) rules and regulations.

On tap in the orientation seminars and clinics are UCI statutes and constitution; general organization; regulations on road, track and mountain bike races; discipline and procedure; organizing and managing races, and marshaling and escorting.

Dates of the orientation seminars and clinics will be announced later. For inquiries, please call 879-4374 or 879-4378.

Also scheduled is the staging of a national commissaries' course in June or July in line with the country's hosting of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Cycling clubs, individuals and groups which organize races are encouraged to have their events sanctioned so that they could be included in the PhilCycling calendar for grading purposes.

Pacquiao phenomenon triggers boxing fad in Infanta town

RENEWED interest in boxing has prompted a small town in Pangasinan to stage a boxing contest during its fiesta with hopes of triggering a grassroots initiative to discover new ring champions.

The amateur boxing contest, to be held in Infanta, Pangasinan, starting at 6 p.m. on April 28, will pit the town's best against the top boxers of neighbor province Zambales.

"This is the first ever boxing contest to be held in Infanta and is seen as the highlight of our fiesta celebrations," said Councilor Alberto M. Taguian, president of the Infanta Pangasinan Amateur Boxing Association Inc., which organized the event.

"We have Filipino ring idol Manny Pacquiao to thank for the added enthusiasm for the contest," said Taguian, who is himself a boxing aficionado. "Hopefully this will start off similar efforts in other small towns that will produce new Mannys."

TAGUIAN

Taguian, a lawyer-cum-police officer in Manila who went back to his roots after retirement, said the town's bets in the First Infanta Amateur Boxing Showdown would be led by Arnel Dumanat and Darwin Refamonte, gold and silver medalists respectively in Ilocos Region Athletic Association Meets. Both were born in the Visayas, he said, but migrated to Infanta because of fishing, their parents' livelihood.

But the main event will be a five-rounder between Jerry Tayao, 22, of Bogo, Cebu City, and Ricky Fernandez, also 22, from Infanta.

The supporting event will feature a four-rounder between Jojit Valdez, 23, of Sta. Cruz, Zambales, and Wilfred Nantes, 22.

"The showdown will provide experience to aspiring boxers while gifting the people with a rousing entertainment," said Taguian. "Boxing is certainly a better high for young people than other senseless activities such as drug abuse."

"If they excel in boxing, they can be like Manny and be able to fulfill their dream at a young age," he added.

Real Spicy tipped to rule Triple Crown series

CHAMPION juvenile colt Real Spicy is the horse to beat in this year's Triple Crown series.

The most promising galloper from the star-studded stable of sports patron Hermie Esguerra, Real Spicy is fancied to win the three-leg series starting with the P1.7-million Cojuangco Cup on May 22 at the Santa Ana Park. The kickoff leg covers 1,600 meters.

An island-born 3-year-old chestnut colt by US Triple Crown two-leg winner Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale, Real Spicy scored back-to-back victories in his latest outings—both 1,600m events—at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, where he nosed out archrival Speed Advantage last April 3 and at the Santa Ana oval where he beat the field by some eight lengths one week later.

"*Nasa kundisyon siya talaga* (He's really in top condition)," said Pat Dilema, Real Spicy's 26-year-old multi-awarded jockey. "*Sana huwag na itong magbago* (I hope his form doesn't change)."

In 14 runs thus far, Real Spicy has won 10 times, six at the San Lazaro Leisure Park and four at the Santa Ana oval. Real Spicy lost a protested race to Speed Advantage at the Santa Ana last March 20.

The main threat to Real Spicy in this year's Triple Crown field is Speed Advantage, a bay colt by Royal Premier out of Trudy Capote (USA). Carrying the colors of the Bobby Yutadco Stable, Speed Advantage is bred by real estate businessman Toti Carino.

"Speed Advantage should be a worthy rival for Real Spicy in this series for three-year-olds," said Esguerra. "It should be an interesting series for all horse racing fans to see."

The Triple Crown is one of the richest, most colorful and widely followed horse racing events in the country today. In 2004, the TC races posted record sales and drew one of the largest crowds in recent memory. During the third and final leg held at the rain-soaked Santa Ana Park, more than 10,000 fans saw Empire King, brilliantly ridden by jockey Jeffrey Ladiana, win the Horseman's Cup.

Host club Santa Ana Park grossed record sales of P41.8 million, surpassing its previous high of P40.282 million set during the second leg.

A beaming Jaime Dilag, chair of the sponsoring Philippine Racing Commission, hailed the record sales, saying the single biggest beneficiary is the national government through taxes derived from sales at both the Santa Ana Park and San Lazaro Leisure Park. Last year, the racing industry contributed more than P1 billion to the government coffers.

"We should have more events such as the Triple Crown series to make us patronize the races," said a longtime racing fan from Bulacan. "The races are worth watching."

* * *

YENG GUIAO'S DILEMMA. Replacing Darlon Johnson, Red Bull Barako's 6-foot-9 import from Las Vegas, won't be easy for coach Yeng Guiao. The 43-year-old Guiao would have much preferred letting Johnson go mainly because the import has not been impressive in his most recent outings in the PBA Fiesta Conference, the reason the Barakos are in such a sad state in the team standings.

But in an out-of-town game in Bohol last April 21, Johnson showed why he should stay here longer.

Ably supported by old reliable Lordy Tugade, Johnson sparked underdog Red Bull to a nail-biting 104-102 victory over star-studded Talk 'N Text, giving the Barako a respectable 5-4 win-loss slate.

"Darlon played very well that night," said Guiao. "I guess there's no need to replace him at the moment. *Baka lalung masama ang makuha* (We might acquire an even more inferior import)."

Guiao and team manager Tony Chua have put together a respectable and competitive team for this season anchored on Johnson, Tugade, Rico Villanueva, Junthy Valenzuela, Topex Robinson, Jimwell Torion and new acquisitions Vergel Meneses, EJ Feihl and Warren Ybañez. It has also acquired the services of American physical conditioner Nathaniel "EA" Addison Jr.

* * *

BITS AND PIECES. Reader Paul Mortel of Marikina City writes: "At the rate we are tackling the problem of the near-extinct tamaraws of Mindoro, we will just wake up one morning to realize the tamaraws are gone forever... like the dinosaurs, then we will say, '*Sayang*.'" Mortel also lamented the government's penchant for declaring too many holidays, saying that could be a reason why our country is not making any progress. "Why can't we be like the Japanese who are workaholics?"... There will be no Milo BEST basketball clinic in Marilao this summer due to time constraints and lack of local manpower.

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

Paragua to get GM title any day now

ANYTIME this week, Mark Paragua will get the Grandmaster norm he's been waiting for. This assurance comes from the NCFP. PDI PHOTO

CEBU CITY—Mark Paragua will get his much-coveted GM norm anytime this week.

This was the assurance given by Fide webmaster and NCFP director Casto Abundo yesterday after gracing the opening ceremonies of the Filway-Time Life Visayas leg of the active chess tournament here.

"Anytime this week," said Abundo, who made the ceremonial moves along with Paragua, Filway Marketing Inc. president Hector Tagaysay, Cebu City sports chair Jonathan Guardo, NCFP committee chair Wilfredo Abalos and GMs Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio and Nelson Mariano II.

Former Fide president Florencio Campomanes spoke before the participants during the opening.

Paragua completed his GM norm last year after a dominating performance in the Alushta tournament in Ukraine last October when he won twice and placed second in three legs.

Abundo's statement could mean that the Fide's Qualification Commission had recognized the Alushta results, which it once branded as "suspicious."

Paragua returned from the World Chess Olympiad in Spain last November without the GM title, also despite Fide's earlier pledge that he would be conferred the honor there.

Abundo said the Fide was only waiting for the official communication of results from tournament organizers in Alushta.

Abundo once served as the chief lieutenant of Campomanes when he served as Fide head.

If he gets the title, Paragua will become the sixth Filipino GM after the late Rosendo Balinas Jr., Torre, Antonio, Mariano and Bong Villamayor.

"This is a wonderful development for Philippine chess," said Torre, Asia's first GM, of the impending recognition of Paragua, who has the highest ever ELO rating by a Filipino of 2596.

Meanwhile, Torre, Antonio, Paragua, Davao leg champion IM Idelfonso Datu and Mariano debuted in the Open division at presstime yesterday against Ernesto Retanal Jr., Alexander Bayubay, Julius Bebesisco, Julius Belderol and Jason Bermudo, respectively. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Sisters of Mary studes press bid for overall MYG crown

FIFTEEN more meet records fell in athletics as Sisters of Mary pressed its bid to capture the overall championship in the fourth Manila Youth Games yesterday.

The SOM campaigners, carrying the colors of KaMaynila in District 6, won seven times while accounting for five new records, including three by sprinter Melanie Magbanua.

With the remaining final events and the medal bouts in taekwondo still being decided late yesterday, District 6 is leading the race for the overall championship with a medal haul of 30 golds, 19 silvers and 24 bronzes.

Erstwhile overall leader Jose Abad Santos High School of District 2 dropped to second with a gold-silver-bronze tally of 22-18-18, followed closely by Binondo with 21-27-26 and Paco, 21-19-12.

The 13-year-old Magbanua stood out as the Games' fastest girl in the 13-15 bracket, running the 100-meter dash in 13.3 seconds to eclipse the old 13.62 standard set by last year's outstanding performer, Emerlyn Roselle Illescas of Dr. Albert Elementary School.

She came back later to top the 200 and 400 meters in record-shattering fashions. She clocked 28.6 in the 200 and 1:05.2 in the 400 meters.

Other SOM record-breakers were Marilou Amila, winner of the girl's 13-15 shot put in 7.63 meters, and Glenda Pajarillo, who ruled the triple jump in the same age group in 10.11 meters.

Miriam Colongoy rounded out the SOM victors by winning the girl's 16-17 century dash in 12.7 seconds and the 200 in 27.1.

Matching Magbanua's three-gold haul was Jeffrey Valeriano of Letran, who reigned supreme in the 400 meters for the boys' 13-15 level with a new mark of 55.4.

Dr. Albert Elementary School, leader in athletics in the first three days, could only settle for three golds with Vanessa Faye Acbayan winning two and Bernadette Macabeo, one. Acbayan set new records in the 200 meters in 31.2 seconds and 400 meters in 1.13.6, both in the 12-under class.

Other new record-holders were Patrick Unso in the boys' 12-under 100 meters; Romar Branola in triple jump and high jump; Randolph Hernandez in boys' shot put; Rodel Nadela in boys' 12-under 400 meters and Aurora Elementary School's 4x400 girls' relay.

Forces launches golf tourney for a cause

THE FEDERATION of Retired Commissioned and Enlisted Soldiers (Forces) will stage the first Forces Veterans Cup Invitational on June 22 at the Aguinaldo Golf Club course.

This was jointly announced yesterday by Brig. Gen. Rodrigo Gutang and Commodore Ismael Aparri, Forces president and chair, respectively, after meeting with other organizing committee members.

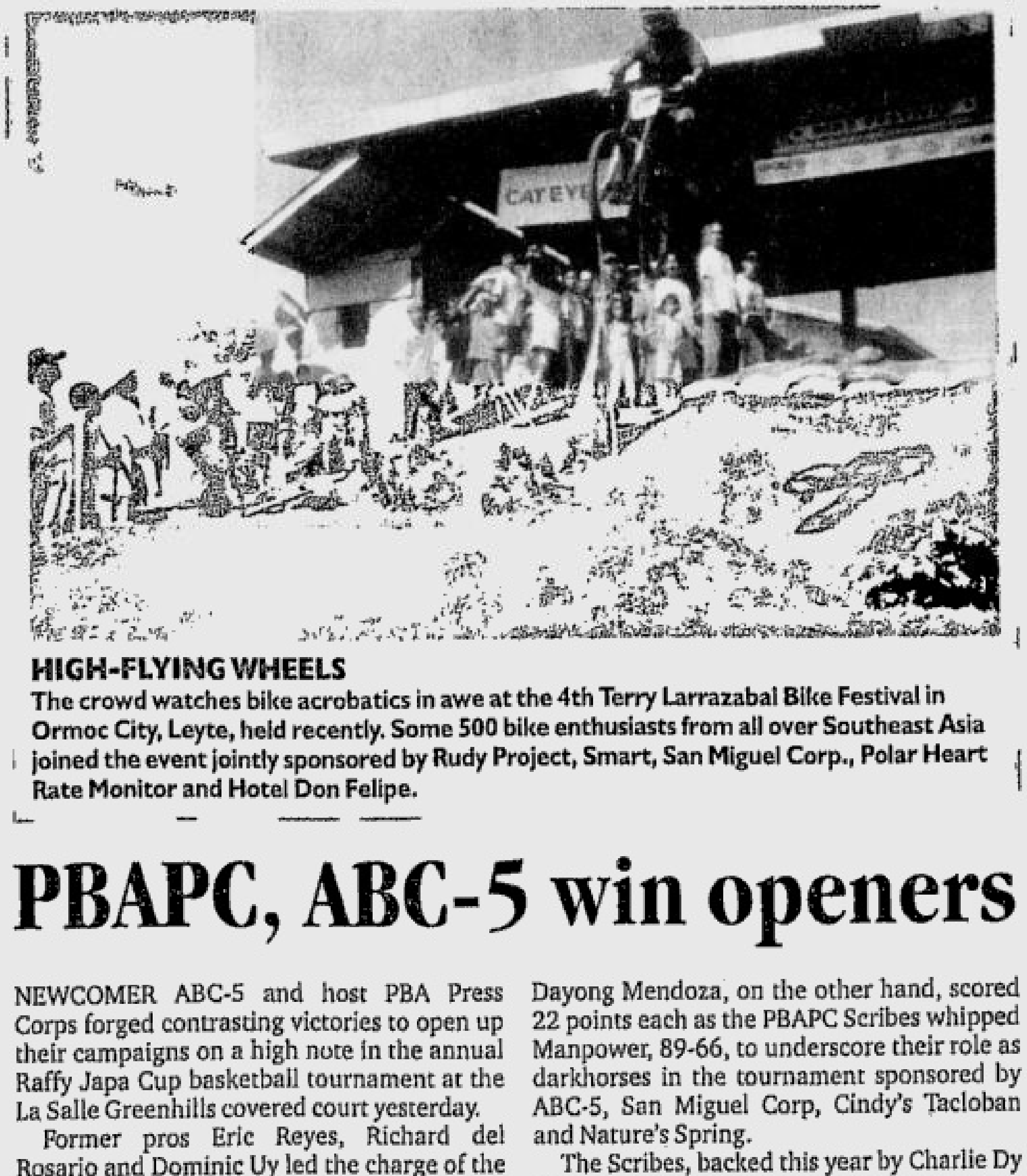
"We are staging this annual event for the benefit of neglected, less fortunate and marginalized members of our community," Gutang said. "Whatever funds we can raise will go a long way for them."

Echoed Aparri: "We have a membership of about 286,000. And they would benefit from this annual event. They could use the money to buy medicine and vitamins."

The officials said they welcome those who are interested in sponsoring the tournament and those who would want to join the competition.

For more details, prospective sponsors and participants may contact Tess Calub at telefax 721-0550 and cellular phone 0916-5133588.

"Proceeds will go directly to the Forces Veterans Welfare Program, which includes the 'Botika ng Mga Beterano' intended to meet their health needs for medicine," Gutang and Aparri said.



HIGH-FLYING WHEELS

The crowd watches bike acrobatics in awe at the 4th Terry Larrazabal Bike Festival in Ormoc City, Leyte, held recently. Some 500 bike enthusiasts from all over Southeast Asia joined the event jointly sponsored by Rudy Project, Smart, San Miguel Corp., Polar Heart Rate Monitor and Hotel Don Felipe.

PBAPC, ABC-5 win openers

NEWCOMER ABC-5 and host PBA Press Corps forged contrasting victories to open up their campaigns on a high note in the annual Raffy Japa Cup basketball tournament at the La Salle Greenhills covered court yesterday.

Former pros Eric Reyes, Richard del Rosario and Dominic Uy led the charge of the Astigozoles, who bucked a scary rally in the endgame by the ProStats Funstatistics, for a 75-71 victory in the tournament held in honor of the late founding president of the PBA Press Corps.

Jojo Caunceran and Shell assistant coach Dayong Mendoza, on the other hand, scored 22 points each as the PBAPC Scribes whipped Manpower, 89-66, to underscore their role as darkhorses in the tournament sponsored by ABC-5, San Miguel Corp, Cindy's Tacloban and Nature's Spring.

The Scribes, backed this year by Charlie Dy and 24 to Score, also got a big lift from rookie playmaker Nat dela Cruz for the victory.

Eliminations will be a single round robin affair among the seven competing teams with the top four advancing to the knockout semifinals. The winners square off for the title.

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- ✓ Preservatives
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- ✓ Sauces and dressings
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Cat's Gold conquers PSA Cup field

By Edwin Villanueva, Contributor

CAT'S Gold proved she can also last the distance as she conquered the mile with relative ease in ruling the 2005 Philracom-PSA Cup yesterday at the Santa Ana Park.

The 4-year-old chestnut filly ran as light as a feather under star rider Jonathan Hernandez and triumphed in wire-to-wire style, beating top pick Control Freak by three lengths.

"*Talagang matibay ito sa harapan kaya 'dun ko siya agad ipinuwesto* (She's really tough when she's in front so I put her there right away)," said Hernandez of his second-favored mount who tackled the 1,600-meter (1 mile) route for only the first time.

It was the eighth win in 10 starts thus far by Cat's Gold at the Makati race venue and 10th in 13 runs overall.

The triumph was worth P240,000 for grieving Mandaluyong Rep. Benhur Abalos, whose eldest daughter Ciara passed away two days ago. He was represented by trainer Ruben Tupas at the awarding rites.

HERNANDEZ RAFFY LERMA

CAT'S GOLD, ridden by JB Hernandez, pulls away from the pack to top the PSA Cup at the Sta. Ana Park. RAFFY LERMA

Chair Jimmy Dilag of the sponsoring Philippine Racing Commission and Philippine Sportswriters Association president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya, handed the trophies. The racing body stages the race annually in cooperation with the prestigious group of the country's sports scribes.

Realizing that no one in the field can match Cat's Gold's speed from the gates, Hernandez wasted no time driving the Rindo Indy-Lady Ping progeny to the early lead.

Only first pick Control Freak pressed Cat's Gold as the Aussie import closed to within a length at the far turn. But the challenge was easily quashed as the eventual winner simply drew away when they straightened out for home.

"*Marami pa siya kaya alam ko tatagal* (She still had a lot left so I knew she would last the distance)," added Hernandez after Cat's Gold nailed down her first stakes race victory.

Sir Brendan Jean finished third then came Shadowfax, Fiery Red, War Hero and San Diego Force.

Cat's Gold clocked a respectable 1 minute 41.4 seconds (25.5-24-23.5-28.5) in the race watched by a huge Sunday throng.

Later in the day, Hernandez piloted Master King to victory in the Santa Ana Park Challenge Run.

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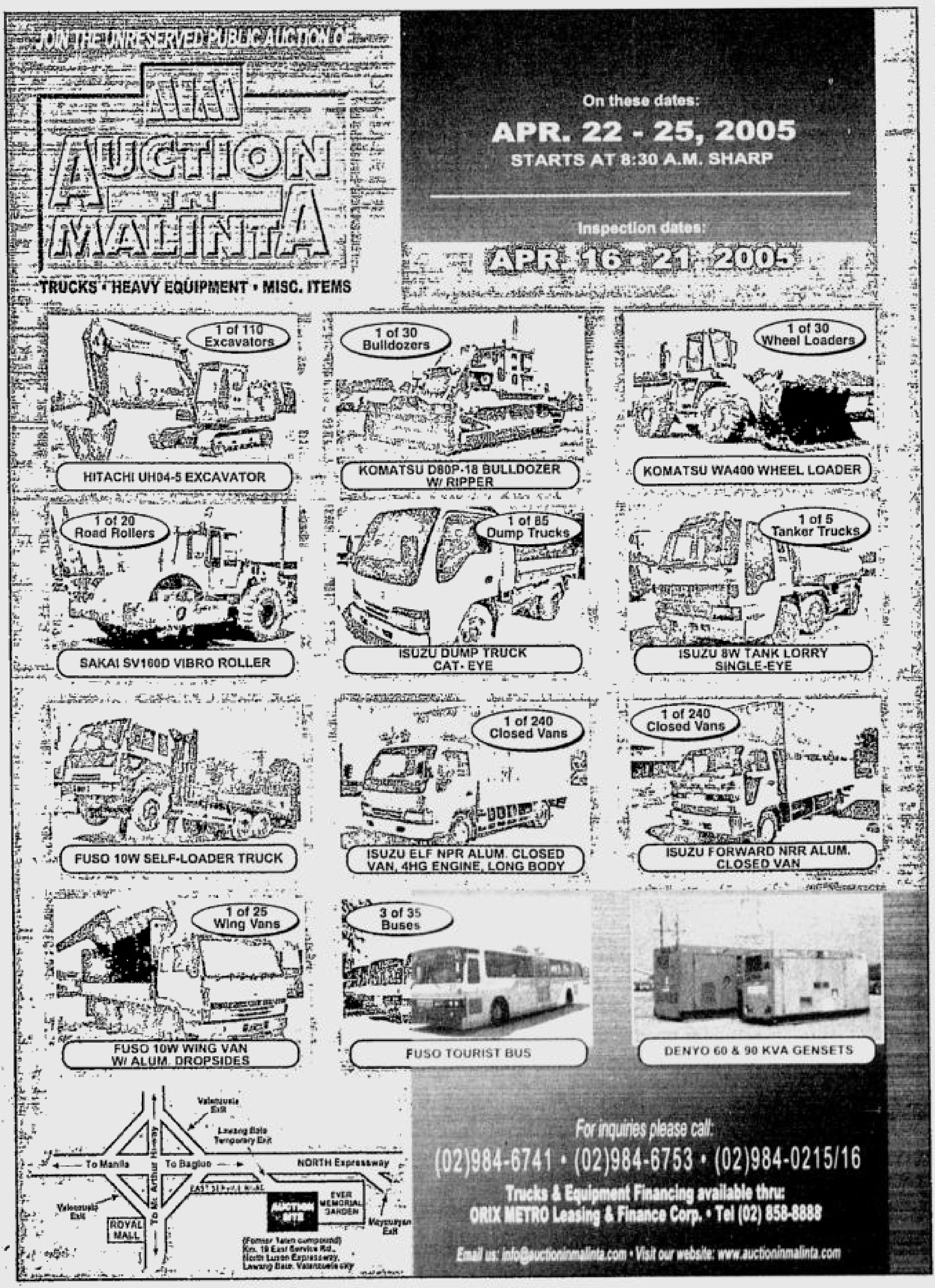
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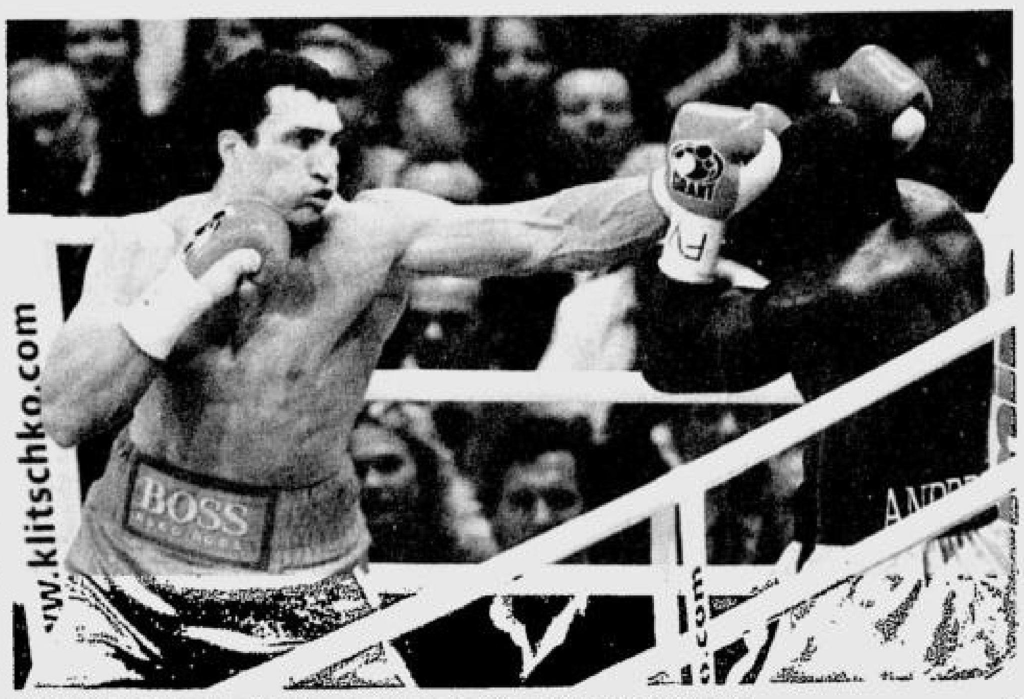

WLADIMIR Klitschko (left) rocks Eliseo Castillo with a powerful left. A

Klitschko knocks out Castillo in fourth round

DORTMUND, Germany—Former WBO champion Wladimir Klitschko stopped previously unbeaten Eliseo Castillo of Cuba in the fourth round of a scheduled 10-round heavyweight contest on Saturday.

Klitschko, the younger brother of WBC world champion Vitali Klitschko, knocked down Castillo with a straight right nine seconds from the end of the round.

Castillo, who's record slipped to 18-1-1, climbed to his feet but the referee waved the fight.

"I wanted to come back, to be world champion again," said Klitschko, now 44-3. "This was a step in the right direction."

Klitschko was once regarded as a more promising fighter than Vitali, but his career nosedived after knockouts from Corrie Sanders and Lamon Brewster in WBO title losses.

That raised questions about his chin, which the 2.01-meter (6-foot-7) Ukrainian couldn't answer on Saturday. He was rarely tagged as he stood outside and threw left jabs from the opening seconds.

In the third round, he also began throwing his more powerful right, while Castillo rarely punched back.

This was the first fight for Klitschko without Vitali in his corner. The WBC champion was operated on his back a few days ago.

"I still want to make our dream come true, that we will be world champions at the same time," Klitschko said. "It looks good with the IBF against Chris Byrd."

Castillo, who lives in Miami, had beaten only one name fighter—former champion Michael Moorer.

After the quick end to the fight, there were some boos mixed in with the cheers for Klitschko from a crowd of 10,000—despite the two brothers' huge popularity in Germany, where they started their careers.

Klitschko's trainer Emanuel Steward, whose charges included Lennox Lewis, said the Ukrainian's tag of lacking a chin and courage weren't true. AP

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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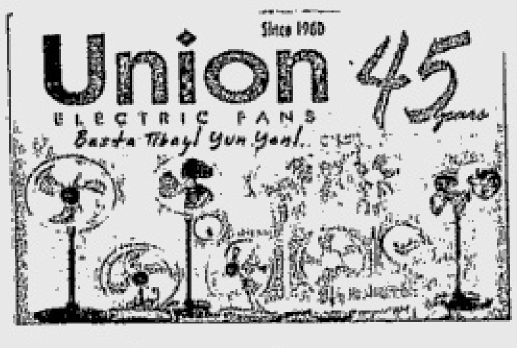

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Advertisers pull out of 'offensive' talk shows

A total of 136 media personalities sign petition letter against scandal TV

JOSE Javier Reyes drafted position letter

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

LEADING advertisers have pulled out of show biz TV talk shows, particularly those that have aired stories on sex-video "scandals," starting this past weekend.

The move was in support of a position letter and signature campaign initiated by award-winning filmmaker and scriptwriter Jose Javier Reyes against scandal-oriented talk shows.

News that McCann Erickson Philippines, one of the country's top advertising companies, had already withdrawn from "offensive" talk shows were circulating as early as Thursday last week.

Also last week, Reyes began meeting with advertisers, including Emily Abrera, chair of McCann Erickson Philippines.

Reyes quoted Abrera on Friday as saying: "So far, all the clients we have contacted have agreed to pull out from the offensive talk shows, some as early as this weekend. We still have to get in touch with just a couple more from our roster."

Famous signatories

"We collected 136 signatures from ABS-CBN and GMA 7 media personalities and also other sectors," Reyes told INQUIRER Entertainment. "Cecile Guidote-Alvarez (executive director of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts) and Nes Jardin (president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines) also signed our position letter."

Among the other signatories are actors Cherrie Pie Picache, Jaclyn Jose, Gardo Versoza, Alan Paule, Jean Garcia, Eula Valdez, Eugene Domingo, Paolo Contis, Coco Martin and Christopher de Leon, broadcast journalist Ces Drilon, TV directors Wenn de Ramas, Andoy Ranay and Khryss Adalia.

On Thursday, right before his last meeting with the advertisers, Reyes guested on the cable show "ANC News at 8" with fellow filmmaker Joey Romero, who represented the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), to discuss the pressing issue with host Ces Drilon.

"Through Romero [who represented chair Ma. Consoliza Laguardia], the MTRCB extended its support to our campaign," Reyes related.

McCann Erickson Philippines is expected to issue this week a formal letter to clients endorsing the drive against scandal TV.

Reyes said that Venus Navalta, head of McCann Erickson's media company, had contacted the heads of the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) and the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies (4 As).

Earlier, the Professional Artist Managers Inc. (Pami), which is pursuing a similar campaign against "unethical entertainment journalism on TV," also set meetings with the AdBoard, 4 As and the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (Pana).

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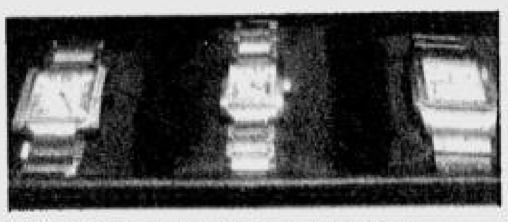

SHE prefers Cartier to Rolex watches

TUBE dresses from Puerto Galera

Geneva Cruz: Classy lady

Text by Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

I'M VERY organized when it comes to my things," says singer Geneva Cruz.

As for her live-in partner, video jock KC Montero: "I'm so unlike him. I fix his things and he disarranges them."

The couple have been living together since 2001 in a three-story house in Quezon City.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Heaven, 9, Gen's son by former Introvoys drummer Paco Arespacochaga, lives with them.

"Just look at KC's shoes," she says as she ushers INQUIRER Entertainment into the master bedroom on the second floor. "He owns around 200 pairs, and they're all over the place."

Gen's things, on the other hand, are all neatly arranged in moveable closets just outside the bedroom. Her shoes are stashed away on racks compared to KC's, which line the staircase.

Inside Gen's closet are her first-ever pair of Prada sandals, Ugg boots from KC's mom, "super favorite" Gwen Stefani bags, and the skirts that she is currently obsessed about. "Some of my things are still in my mom and dad's house in Las Piñas, inside my old room," she explains.

"I love dressing up. I get ideas by reading magazines and watching music videos and fashion shows on television. I do this because I'm a performer and looking good is part of my job," she points out. "I'm at my happiest when I'm onstage."

Gen is set to leave for a series of shows in the Middle East with the Apo Hiking Society and Nanette Inventor this June. In July, she will perform with Bayani Agbayani and Jed Madela in three cities in Canada.

"I'm recording my next album soon," she announces. "And for the very first time, I will be producing it with my manager Arnold Vegafria. My heart is in singing and performing. Music is in my blood. In fact, my son is into rap music. KC is a big influence in his life."

SHOES

"This pair of brown Prada slip-ons is memorable to me. This is my first Prada pair. I worked hard for this. I bought it in 1998, when I received my first credit card. My mom said, 'Why are you wasting your money on those?' What I do is buy shoes in classic designs, so they would never go out of style and I could use them for a long time.

"My observation is, the more expensive, the sturdier footwear is.

"I own a couple of rubber shoes that I use

GENEVA/ A2-3

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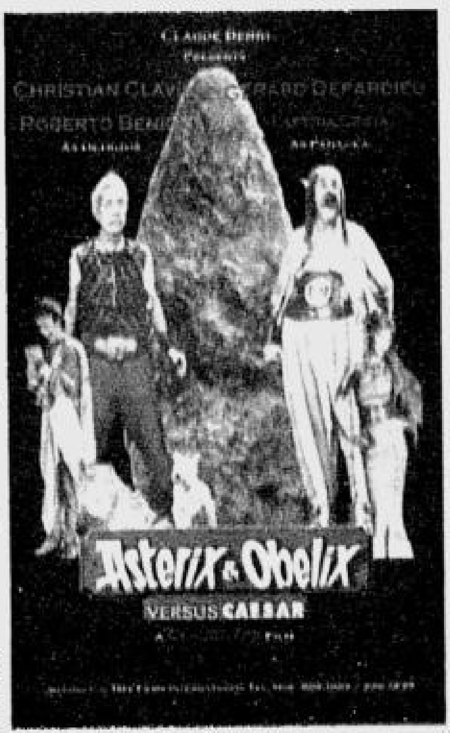
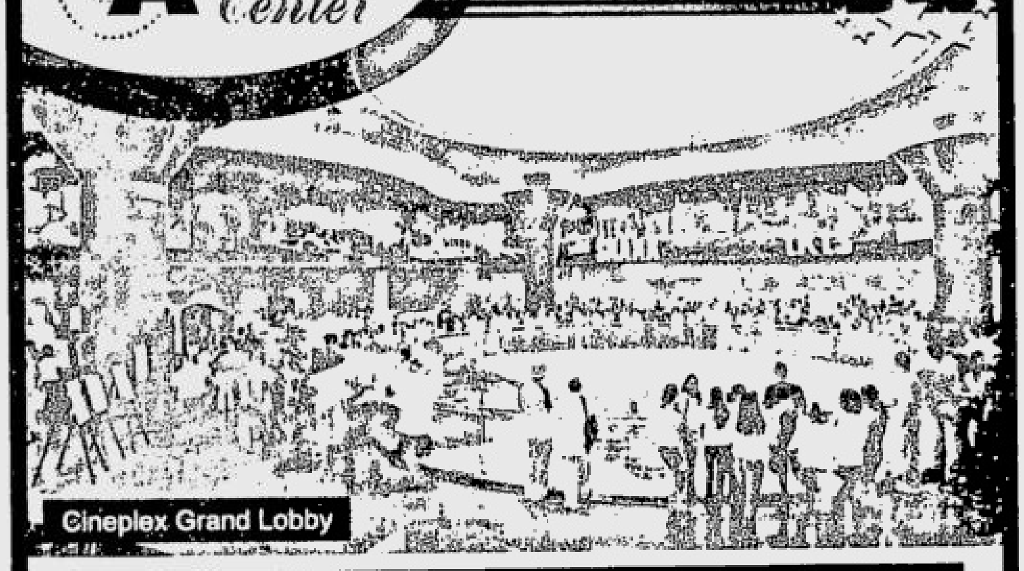


Araneta Center Leisure Guide



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2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE May 4
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SHE wears this skirt and a matching jersey shirt from Linea Italia when she wants to feel like a teenager.

for working out. Usually, I wear shoes in the shade of my sweat pants and shirt. My current favorite is a Nike pair that KC gave to me. Actually, most of my rubber shoes are from him. He's good at picking them.

"My favorite pair of boots is a gift from KC's mom last Christmas. They're Ugg Boots, currently in fashion in the States now. You probably see Beyonce or Jennifer Lopez wearing them. I have a matching purse, which also serves as warmers for the arms (hangs the purse on her neck and puts her two arms into a hole in the purse).

"Rachel Alejandro, who is now based in New York, is one of my best friends. I asked her to buy me a pair of brown cowboy boots. I told her '*Bahala ka na* (You choose). I just don't want it to be too high and the leather to be too tough.' She got me a pair from Nine West for $200. Real leather. It actually has this distinct leather smell.

"I have a pair of riding boots, too. I've been into horseback riding since 1999. The boots were made to fit the saddle. This is to keep the rider from slipping."

BAGS

"My super favorite bags are the ones designed by Gwen Stefani (former member of rock group No Doubt). I love her music and sense of style. She calls the product LAMB. I bought the bags at Hong Kong airport. It's not as expensive as Louis Vuitton, but it's really cool. Gwen also designed a few pieces for Lesportsac.

"This cylinder Ferragamo bag is special because it was KC's gift to me last Christmas.

"I also love using the JLo bag from Louis Vuitton. It's another favorite. LV designed this specifically for Jennifer Lopez. It has pockets for makeup and water bottle."

HANGING out with son Heaven, 9, at KC Montero's music room

SHE'S "obsessed" with skirts, specifically styles from the '50s.

MANGO chiffon top, perfect for the beach with a tube top or animal-print bra.

SKIRTS

"Right now, I'm obsessed with skirts, specifically styles from the 1950s. I even asked my designer Eric Pineda to make skirts for me, like this black tutu. I also have skirts from La Bianca in Greenbelt.

"I wore this white ruffled skirt during my birthday party last April 4. The party had a Mexican theme so I matched the skirt with a thick brown leather belt, a white top and a pair of white sandals.

"For someone who is not into skirts but is willing to try, I suggest long skirts first, fabrics that are thin and flowing."

TOPS

"My favorite top is this bustier that Eric Pineda made for me. I love it so much, I have it in red, black and white. I always go to Eric because he already knows what I like.

"I'm also into jerseys; they're perfect for jeans. I bought some of these pieces in Japan. The others—those with matching skirts—are from Linea Italia.

"I pick tops depending on my mood. That's why I have clothes that range from the classic to the really funky and boyish ones. If I want to feel young, like a teenager, I wear my jersey shirts.

"I also like wearing this Mango chiffon top to the beach. I match it with a tube top or animal-printed bra. This looks good on TV if with a pair of blue jeans.

"I also own camisoles or lingerie tops—those that can be worn on evening dates. They're in fashion nowadays.

"But what I really like wearing are white tank tops. Because I take extra care in getting a tan, I like people to notice it."

JEANS

"I like buying jeans from Abercrombie. There's one particular pair that I really like because it feels comfy. I also like how its fabric faded.

"A memorable pair from Abercrombie is this (holds out a pair with a 'KC's Girl' patch design). I designed it. Eric Pineda made the details.

"One good trick to make your legs look long is to wear high-heeled shoes with hipster-type jeans."

JACKETS

"My usual outfit comprises of a pair of jeans, a tank top and a jacket. My favorites are the leather jacket from Bebe and the vintage Adidas-Hello Kitty jacket that Tita Virgie Ramos of Gift Gate gave me."

DRESSES

"I buy dresses depending on the fabric and neckline. Right now, because it's summer, I'm into tube dresses. This is best for girls with nice shoulders and tan lines. But when it comes to evening dresses, my favorite is the turquoise dress that I got from Dolce & Gabanna. It's really in fashion these days. What I do is match it with my favorite black strappy Guccis. The dress actually has a bra with the same color."

EYEGLASSES

"Right now, I'm actually into what they call aviator sunglasses. They're kind of big. *Pang*-retro *sila*. I bought this pair in Hong Kong.

"My Gucci pair is best worn when I don't want people to see me without makeup."

WATCHES

"My favorite watch is another gift from Tita Virgie. It's especially made for me. It has dangling letters that spell my nickname, Gen.

"I love Cartier watches. I don't know why, maybe because they look classy. Compared to Rolex watches, for example, Cartier has better designs."

BUSTIER by Eric Pineda

Tips from this clothes horse:

- High heels with hipster jeans make the legs look long
- Tube tops are perfect for girls with nice shoulders and tan lines
- Skirt first-timers? Start with long ones in thin and flowing fabrics

SCENTS

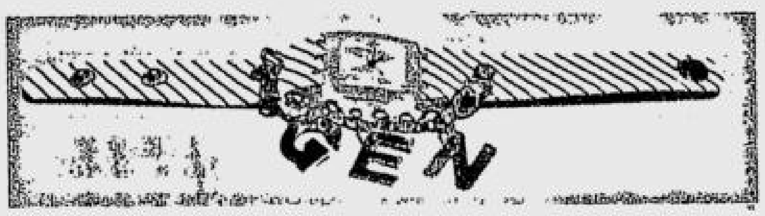
"Right now, I'm using Baby Grace from Philosophy. KC's mom gave this to me because she knows how much I like baby powder scents.

"Have you heard of Dessert Beauty by Jessica Simpson? I have her edible body cream in chocolate-coconut flavor. You apply it on your skin, put some candy sprinkles and lick it."

COSMETICS

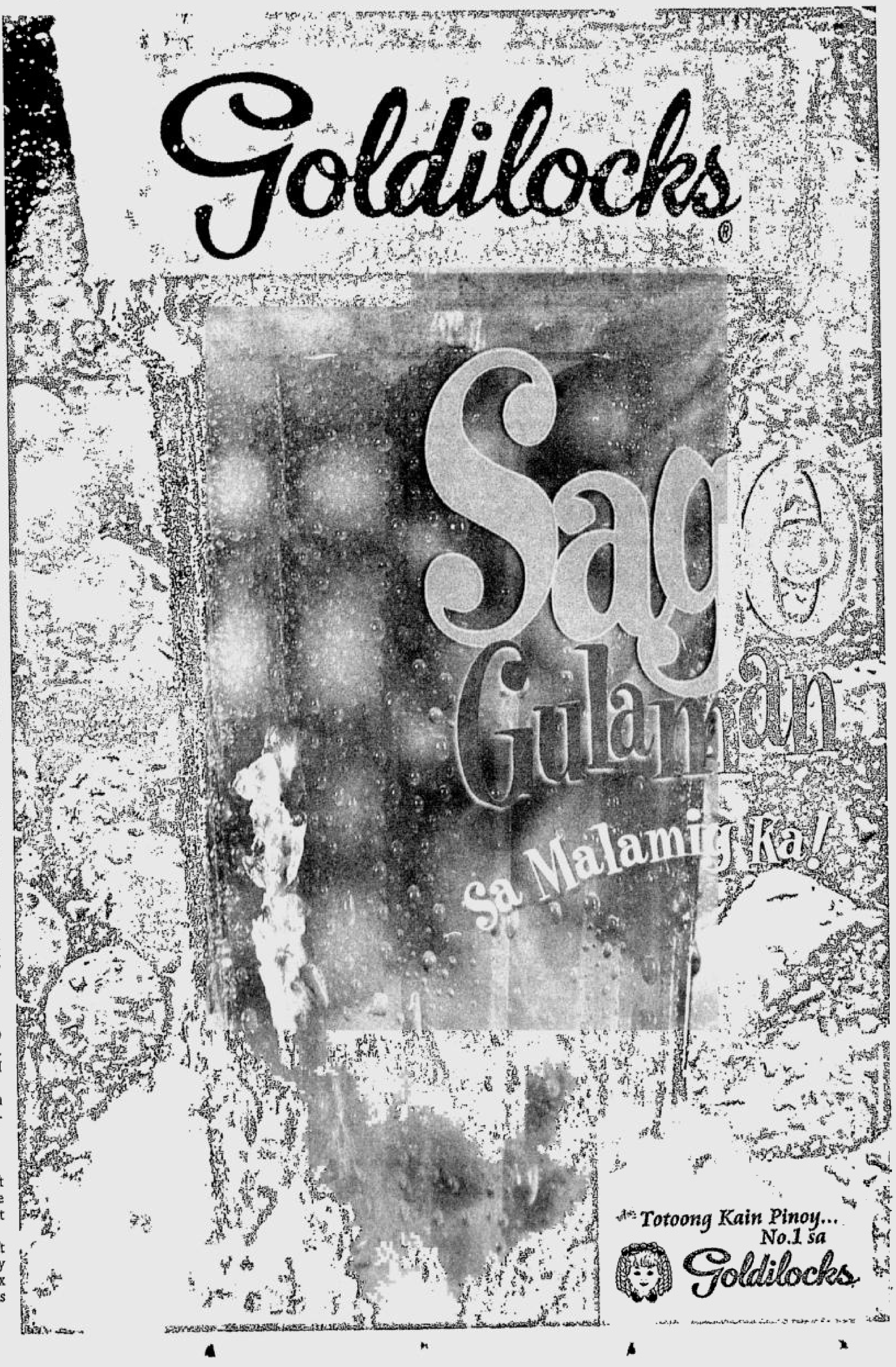
"I buy lipstick and lip-liner from Mac. I also like the gloss from Lancôme. I always wear false eyelashes when I perform on stage and appear on TV. Accentuating the eyes is important to me. What I do is cut the false eyelashes in half and put them on each side of the eyes. Your eyelids would get itchy if you use the whole lash.

"For my hair cut and coloring, I go to Privé by Geoff Simpson at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City. I love my stylist, Freddie Schäfer, because he knows what I want."



A GIFT from Gift Gate, especially made for Gen

ONLY Mac for Gen's lips. She wears false lashes onstage.



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GALLERIA

1 SAHARA • THX
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

2 GUESS WHO?
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 THE INTERPRETER
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

4 THE JACKET
11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

5 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

6 THE WEDDING DATE
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

7 PARAISO
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

8 BOSO
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

9 SAMARA RING 2
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

10 THE PACIFIER
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA

1 THE INTERPRETER
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

2 SAHARA
11:10 1:50 4:30 7:10 9:50

3 GUESS WHO?
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

4 THE WEDDING DATE
10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 10:00

5 THE JACKET
10:40 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50

6 BOSO
10:40 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:20 9:40

7 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
11:10 1:50 4:25 7.00 9:40

METRO EAST

1 PARAISO
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 SAHARA
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

3 THE WEDDING DATE
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

4 SAMARA RING 2
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00

5 GUESS WHO?
11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30

6 THE JACKET
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30

7 THE INTERPRETER
11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30

8 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
10:55 1:50 4:45 7:40 10:30

NOVALICHES

1 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:20

2 THE INTERPRETER
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25

3 PARAISO
10:15 12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:00

4 THE JACKET
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20

5 GUESS WHO?
11:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25

6 SAHARA
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25

7 RESERVE

8 RESERVE

PIONEER

1 SAHARA
2 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
3 GUESS WHO
4 THE INTERPRETER

CITISQUARE MALABON

1 ASTERIX AND OBELIX
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 PARAISO

CAINTA

1 THE INTERPRETER
2 GUESS WHO?
3 SAHARA
4 THE WEDDING DATE

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R

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STA. ROSA

1 THE PACIFIER
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 ONG BAK
4 ALONE IN THE DARK
5 SAHARA

LIPA

1 HOSTAGE
2 BE COOL
3 BIRTH
4 SAMARA RING 2
5 CLOSER

DASMARINAS

1 HIDE AND SEEK
2 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD
3 PARAISO
4 BUNSHINSABA
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

ANGELES

1 BE COOL
2 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 ONG BAK

IMUS

1 PARAISO
2 GUESS WHO
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 ONG BAK
5 OKAY KA PARE KO
6 SAHARA

STARMILLS

1 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 THE PACIFIER
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
5 BE COOL
6 ONG BAK

BACOLOD

1 THE PACIFIER
2 CONFIDENCE
3 BE COOL
4 HIDE AND SEEK
5 CURSED
6 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD

ILOILO

1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 SAMARA RING 2
4 THE PACIFIER
5 CLOSER
6 ALONE IN THE DARK

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE JACKET	2 THE WEDDING DATE	3 GUESS WHO	4 THE INTERPRETER
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE WEDDING DATE	2 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS	3 THX THE INTERPRETER 12 10, 2 45, 5 20, 7 55, 10 30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SAMARA (RING 2)	5 THE JACKET	6 GUESS WHO	7 SAHARA
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE INTERPRETER 1:15, 3:50, 6:25, 9:00	2 GUESS WHO 12:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX GUESS WHO 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE INTERPRETER 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 FINDING NEVERLAND 1 00, 3 00, 5 00, 7 00, 9 00, 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE WEDDING DATE 2 55, 5 00, 7 05, 9 10, 11 15 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS 1 00, 3 35, 6 10, 8 45, 11 20 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX GUESS WHO	2 THE INTERPRETER		
	3 THE JACKET	4 RING OF NIBELUNGS	5 THE WEDDING DATE	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HIDE & SEEK	2 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	4 CLOSER

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MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

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② Wedding Date
③ Sahara
④ Ring of Nibelungs

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⑤ The Jacket
⑥ The Interpreter
⑦ Guess Who

EVENTS! EVENTS!

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Activity Center

Reworking old films into hit 'telenovelas'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AFTER GMA 7's "Mulawin" demolished its earthbound or underwater competition on the local *telenovela* front, TV channels realized that shows about flying creatures were where the big bucks and ratings were. ABS-CBN tried to even up the score by rushing "Krystala," its own show about a flying heroine, to the small screen, but it didn't dislodge "Mulawin" from the top slot.

Then, GMA 7 took the flying motif one notch higher and had the inspired brainstorm of doing yet another production of "Darna." Initially, there were fears that viewers wouldn't get excited about the umpteenth retelling of the Darna/Narda myth. But the new series' exceptional ratings prove that such fears were unfounded.

The "old" format has been rendered fresh with the introduction of a sexier Darna in the person of **Angel Locsin**, and the production's high-tech, sci-fi look is similarly innovative.

The success of "Darna" on TV has in turn made producers look into other old film classics, to see if their well-known mythology can also be profitably mined on television.

ABS-CBN has again tried to match GMA 7's latest hit with its own retelling of **Fernando Poe Jr.**'s still potent "Panday" film series, with **Jericho Rosales** topbilling.

Then, there's the all-fantasy "Encantadia" telenovela, and the TV version of **Vilma Santos**' early starrer, "Kampanerang Kuba."

What other Pinoy film classics can be dusted off and and made exciting again on TV?

We recently conducted an informal poll among TV-film-buff friends, and they came up with this wish list of old films that could be reworked into new and popular *teleseryes*:

"Jack en Jill." "Bagets." "Pitong Kalbaryo ng Isang Ina." "Blusang Itim." "Zuma." "Prinsipe Amante." "Working Girls." "Tisoy." "Edong Mapangarap."

"Silveria." "Juan Tamad." "Buhay Alamang." "Bukas Luluhod ang mga Tala." "Lo' Waist Gang." "Dahil sa Isang Bulaklak."

"Geron Busabos, Ang Batang Quiapo." "Kamakalawa." "Facifica Falayfay." "Wanted: Perfect Mother."

Any more suggestions?

'Wow Hits 2005'

THE CONTEMPORARY Christian Music (CCM) category is often mistakenly limited to songs only heard in church or at retreats. In reality, however, CCM songs have a wider range, and the category includes all songs that deliver messages about good values.

The category is also surprisingly diverse, with songs representing almost all music genres. A good discovery along these lines is "Wow Hits 2005," a compilation of top CCM radio hits recorded over the last 12 months. Artists included in the album include Jars of Clay, Mercy ME, **Stacie Orrico, Jeremy Camp, Chris Rice, Mark Schultz** and **Selah**.

CCM albums are available at House of Praise stores in the metropolis' leading malls.

'Ocean's Twelve'

STEVEN Soderbergh's hit comedy-actioner, "Ocean's Twelve," is now on DVD and VCD. The exciting crime caper stars **George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Matt Damon, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Andy Garcia, Don Cheadle** and **Bernie Mac**.

'Simonisms'

THANKS to **Loi R. Landicho** of Makati City for sharing his compilation of "Simonisms"—Simon Cowell's scathing remarks on "American Idol," which add spice to the top-rated talent search. Enjoy:

"In a competition full of hamburgers, you are a steak."

"In a second life, I want to come back as your microphone."

"It looks like you've gone into an aging machine."

"It was a little like watching a kitten who wants to be a tiger."

"You're the musical equivalent of Ryan Seacrest."

"I think 30 million TV sets in America had their volume turned down simultaneously tonight."

"(You doing a sexy performance) would be rather like **Randy Jackson** going on 'Baywatch.'"

"Thank God it was only a one-minute song—we'd have a full striptease after three minutes."

"That was the equivalent of musical wallpaper—when you're in a house, you notice the wallpaper, but you don't remember it."

"You've turned into the musical equivalent of a blanket: you're just sort of comfortable and safe."

"Honestly, based on that performance, if I were sitting in a karaoke bar, I'd be switching the microphone off."

"Let me give you a horoscope: A suitcase and plane ticket within 24 hours.

"You have as much Latin flair as a polar bear!"

—And what do the "American Idol" finalists have to say in turn about Simon Cowell? Therein lies a long, tall, pained and even bitchier tale!

What other Pinoy classic can be made exciting again?

STILL SCREAMING, ER, SCREENING

Oscar nominee "Finding Neverland" has pulled out of metro theaters but one, and the thriller "Samara" or "The Ring Two," starring Naomi Watts (in photo) continues to scare willing moviegoers in a handful of cinemas. The explanation, according to its Philippine distributors, is simple: "More terrifying scenes and a higher-pitch screaming experience." The new "Amityville" topped US charts last week for virtually the same reasons.

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1 WEDDING DATE
11:10, 1:30, 3:50
6:10, 8:30, 10:50
PG-13

2 THE INTERPRETER
12:05, 2:55, 5:45
8:35, 11:10
PG-13

3 GUESS WHO?
12:35, 3:10, 5:45
8:20, 10:50
PG-13

4 THE JACKET
10:45, 1:15, 3:45
6:15, 8:45, 11:10

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SAHARA PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:20	GUESS WHO PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:15	RING OF THE NIBELUNGS PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:20
WEDDING DATE PG13 12:00,2.00,4:00, 6:00.8:00,10:00	THE JACKET PG13 12:50,3:10,5.30,7:50,10:10	THE INTERPRETER PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:30

Star group of cinemas movie guide
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3 Paraiso 4 Legendary Street Fighter 5 Sahara Catch Joross Gamboa Live at Metropolis Star Alabang April 24 Sunday 5pm	1 The Jacket 2 Paraiso 3 Under Renovation 4 Under Renovation 5 Ring of Nibelungs 6 Sahara	1 Gymkwando 2 Rental Reservation Star Model Search Live at Starmall Las Pinas April 24-25 2pm

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CINEMA 1 GUESS WHO
10:50, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10
PG13
CINEMA 2 THE INTERPRETER
10:50, 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10
PG13
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SHANG CINEPLEX
① THE INTERPRETER
MTRCB: PG-13
10:50, 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10
② GUESS WHO
MTRCB PG-13
11:30, 2.05, 4:40, 7:15, 9 50
③ WEDDING DATE
MTRCB PG-13
12 30, 2 50, 5 10, 7 30, 9.50
④ SPONGEBOB (GP)
1:20, 3:20, 5 20
SAHARA (PG-13)
7:20, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
MTRCB PG-13 12 40, 3 30, 6 20, 9 10
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10:35 LPS / 11:00 LMF / 1:10 END
2. GUESS WHO
1:35 FS / 2.05 MF / 4:15 / 6:25
8:35 / 10:15 LPS / 10:45 LMF / 12:25 END
633-0076
sm megamall cinema 1
FINDING NEVERLAND
12:00 FS / 12:20 MF / 2:25
4:05 LFS / 4:25 LMF / 6:05 END
633-1901
sm cebu cinema
CINEMA 1: HIDE AND SEEK
[illegible]
CINEMA 3: THE PACIFIER
[illegible]
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METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 FINDING NEVERLAND
2 SAHARA
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 THE JACKET
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 SAMARA: RING 2
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED
9 RESERVED
10 THE INTERPRETER
11 GUESS WHO
12 THE WEDDING DATE

sm city sta. mesa
1 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
2 GUESS WHO
3 THE INTERPRETER
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 OK KA, PARE
7 SAMARA: RING 2
8 SAHARA
9 THE WEDDING DATE
10 THE JACKET

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm city fairview
1 GUESS WHO
2 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 THE INTERPRETER
5 THE JACKET
6 SAHARA
7 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
8 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
9 SAMARA: RING 2
10 FINDING NEVERLAND
11 THE PACIFIER
12 OK KA PARE KO

sm city southmall
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 THE INTERPRETER
5 FINDING NEVERLAND
6 THE WEDDING DATE
7 THE JACKET
8 SAMARA: RING 2
9 SAHARA
10 GUESS WHO

sm supercenter sucat
1 GUESS WHO
2 SAMARA: RING 2
3 SAHARA
4 THE WEDDING DATE

sm city north edsa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 SAHARA
4 THE WEDDING DATE
5 THE INTERPRETER
6 THE JACKET
7 GUESS WHO
8 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS

sm city manila
1 GUESS WHO
2 THE INTERPRETER
3 FINDING NEVERLAND
4 SAHARA
5 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 THE WEDDING DATE
7 OK KA PARE KO
8 SAMARA: RING 2
9 RING OF THE NIBELUNG
10 THE PACIFIER
11 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
12 THE JACKET

sm city bicutan
1 SAHARA
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 GUESS WHO
4 SAMARA: RING 2

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 BE COOL
4 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 THE PACIFIER

sm city marilao
1 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 SAMARA: RING 2

sm city baguio
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 CURSED
3 THE PACIFIER
4 CLOSER

sm city bacoor
1 THE WEDDING DATE
2 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
3 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
4 SAMARA: RING 2
5 SAHARA
6 GUESS WHO
7 THE PACIFIER
8 OK KA PARE KO

sm city batangas
1 BE COOL
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD

sm city dasmariñas
1 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 SAMARA: RING 2
4 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

sm city lucena
1 CURSED
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 CLOSER
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 HIDE AND SEEK
2 RESERVED
3 THE PACIFIER
4 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
6 SAMARA: RING 2
7 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
8 SAHARA

sm city iloilo
1 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
2 RESERVED
3 BE COOL
4 THE PACIFIER
5 BOOGEYMAN
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7 RESERVED
8 SAMARA: RING 2

sm city davao
1 THE PACIFIER
2 SAHARA
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 HOSTAGE
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 HIDE AND SEEK

sm city cagayan de oro
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 THE PACIFIER
3 BE COOL
4 SAMARA: RING 2

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Paula Abdul talks about her life of pain and pills

ABDUL answers viewers' allegations.

FANS of "American Idol" have overrun Internet message boards this season with commentary on contest judge Paula Abdul's seemingly wacky antics on the show.

"I'm wondering if Fox is going to address Paula's very obvious drug and/or alcohol problems," one idolonfox.com message board user posted. "It's getting harder to explain to my kids why she is acting so sloppy and slurring and incoherent."

"Send her to a rehab clinic for several months," another user advised, "and let her come back with a clear vocal presentation and clear head."

In fact, so many users flooded the boards commenting on Abdul's apparent state of intoxication that moderators banned the use of the words "drunk" and "drugs."

After learning of the speculations for herself, Abdul addressed the rumors in an interview with People magazine.

Rare disorder

She denied suffering from an addiction and claims to have been diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder called Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy that causes chronic pain.

Abdul, 42, said the pain began after she suffered a disc injury in a cheerleading accident at age 17 that was exacerbated by a couple of car accidents in the 1980s and a plane crash in 1992. Following the crash, she said she suffered from seizures, eating disorders and depression.

Last summer, she started taking the prescription drug Enbrel, which she said has left her pain-free.

"If people only knew what I've gone through with pain and pills. Not even a year ago I was in so much pain I could barely get up," she told People.

Abdul said she had planned to keep the disorder secret, but felt she needed to explain the truth to her fans.

"It was getting ugly with the lies people were saying," she told Entertainment Tonight. "I want America to know that I have never been addicted to anything, no chemical dependency, nothing for recreational purposes."

E! News Online

Constantine's band gets CD deal

NEW YORK—The band of "American Idol" finalist Constantine Maroulis will release their first CD on May 10, recorded before the singer's fame skyrocketed on the TV talent show.

Koch Records, the label that signed "Idol" failure William Hung, has announced a deal with Pray for the Soul of Betty, the New York band Maroulis fronted before auditioning for the Fox reality program.

Maroulis signed over the rights to his bandmates before joining "Idol," so the self-titled album isn't owned by the show, a publicist for "American Idol" confirmed Friday.

The long-haired rocker is one of six remaining in the contest, where he has emerged as a heartthrob candidate for young girls. Earlier in the season, the show documented Maroulis informing the band of his "Idol" intentions. Though some members then seemed upset about the more mainstream direction, they are now quite happy for the publicity.

"The reason he's doing 'American Idol' is for the band, not for anything else," drummer Hamboussi told The Associated Press Friday, adding that Maroulis and the band remain tight.

"(On 'American Idol') he doesn't get the bass drum or the guitar hitting him in the back of the head," Hamboussi said.

Giovanna Melchiorre, a spokesperson for Koch, said that while Maroulis won't be able to tour with the band, "Legally, I think we're okay."

The record company said Pray for the Soul of Betty draws influences from Led Zeppelin, Soundgarden and Queens of the Stone Age, and "sounds distinctively like a New York City band should sound: intense, raw and powerful." *AP*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, April 25, 2005

WOWmalingMaLi!
9PM SABADO SABAGO!
ABC

ClickTheCity.com
[illegible]

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4.25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5:10 PM)	Naruto (5.35 PM)	Vidjoking	TV Patrol World		Kamao	Hiram	Spirits	Memories Of Bali	Stained Glass	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo. Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	Anime Ring Kaisho				Sentro	Friends	The Apprentice		Fear Factor		Big News	Pops!		Billboard On-Air	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Hungry Heart	Knockout	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Darna	All About Eve (8.45 PM)	Full House (9:15 PM) Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Scare Tactics	The Ring	Infamous Murders	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Sex & the City	Road Trip	
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		Vietnam Revisited (2003 SEG Review)		One-On-One	2005 Japan 9-Ball Festival		IBC News Tonite	Linawin Natin	
JackTV		Wow		Stairball		Rastal	Zeta Project	Mucha Lucha!	Spiderman	Stargate SG1		Witchblade		Twilight Zone		Replicant			
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Combo Nick				Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Complete Savages	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Friends	Will & Grace	The O.C.		Queer eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight Weekend		Temptation Island	
Cinema One		Asin At Paminta				Pangako Ikaw Lang				Bridesmaids				Three Seasons				Amasona	
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Fightbox	Jake 2.0		Charmed		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time
AXN		Lost		The Contender		Hollywood's Greatest Stunts	E Buzz	7 Days (Season III)		Pensacola (Season III)		Fear Factor (Season V)		The Contender		The Contender		CSI: Miami	
Star World	Weird TV	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	The King Of Queens	Everybody Loves Raymond/ Still Standing	Grounded For Life	Frasier	The Casino/Boston Public		Friends	The King Of Queens
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Built For The Kill		Totally Wild	Wildlife Diary	Be The Creature		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wow		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials: Mission Battle Of The Arctic Giants		Built For The Kill/Into The Lost World		Totally Wild	Wildlife Diary
Solar Sports	In This Corner		The Badminton Masters '05 Finals				Davis Cup '05 Highlights		GWS Ep.16-2005	Sagupaan		NBA Jam L022	NBA TV Daily	NBA Playoffs First Round					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Moto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! True Hollywood Story		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Brini Maxwell Show	Modern Girl's Guide	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO	Excess Baggage (2.25 PM)			Grace Quigley (4.10 PM)			Funny About Love (5.45 PM)				A Promise Kept: The Oksana Baiul Story			I Spy			Jumanji (10.35PM)		
Star Movies		Opening Night	Rambo 3			The Hunted (5.15 PM)				Patch Adams (7.05 PM)				The Replacement Killers			Storm Catcher		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Powerpuff Girls	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN				UDA College Dance Teams Div 1A	Spanish Football League 2004/05				English Premier League Highlights 2004/05		Winter X Games VIII Classic Stomped & Slammed	Sportscenter Asia	NBA Anthology Down Low Life in the D-League	2004 Spinvitational Table Tennis C'ships	Premier Snooker League 04 Cardiff Wales				Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			Contagious			I Witness			Truman (6.45 PM)					For Love Or Money			Hard To Kill (10.35PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Wife Swap		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	The District		Wife Swap		Mike Bassett England Managr			Just Cause (10.35PM)		The District (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		American Chopper		Extreme Machines		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Unsolved History				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Civilizations	
Sports Plus				This Is The PGA Tour		Inside the PGA	You've Got to See This	Subway Fresh 500 Highlights		Italia Serie A Highlights 13		Italia Serie A				Shell Houston Open Final rd			
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision	Next Stop			Network Forum		Teledyaryo		The Working President	Concert at the Park			Dial M	

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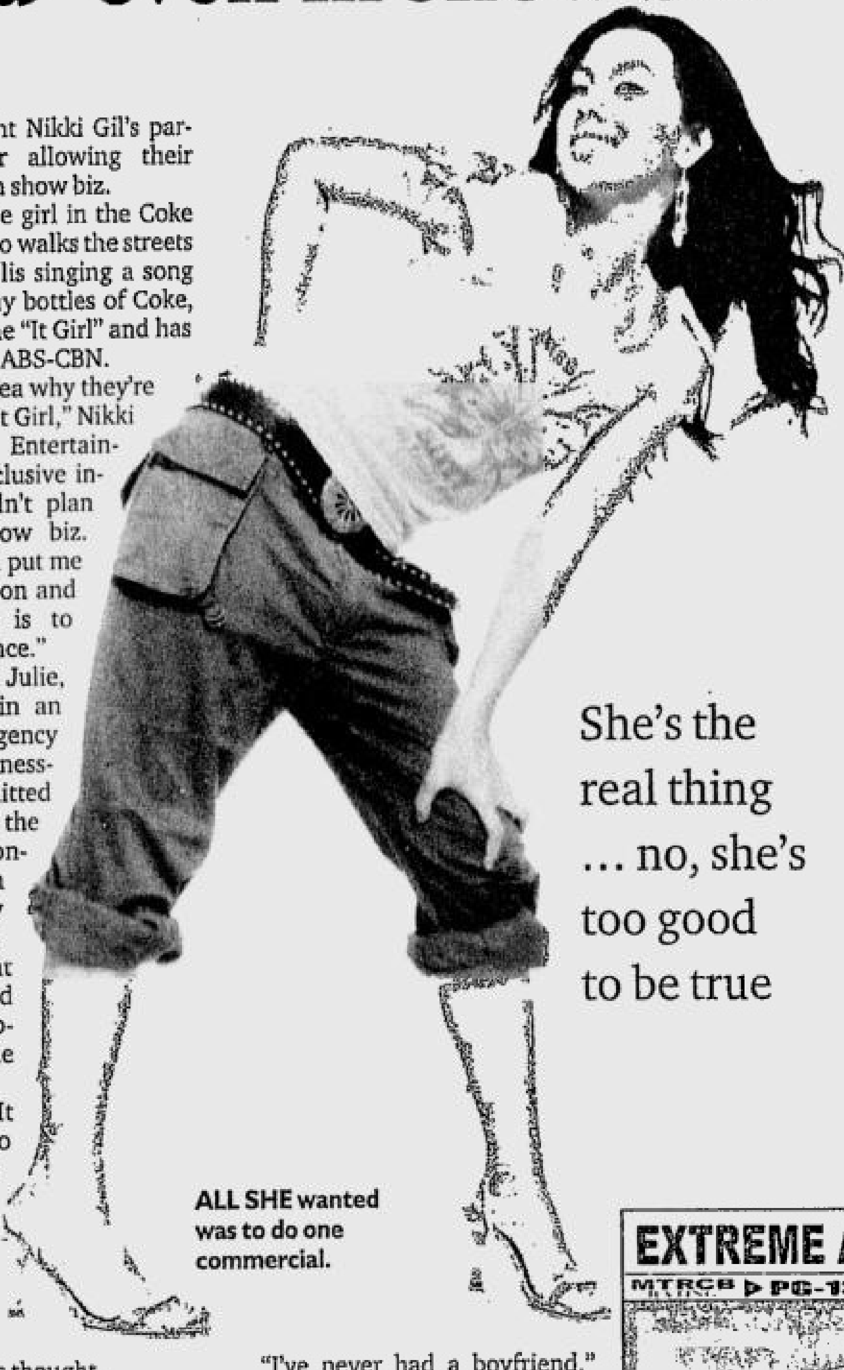
'It Girl' Nikki Gil believes in staying good–even in show biz

By Nini Valera



ALL SHE wanted was to do one commercial.

PEOPLE thought Nikki Gil's parents crazy for allowing their daughter to join show biz.

Nikki, 17, the girl in the Coke commercial who walks the streets of the metropolis singing a song and giving away bottles of Coke, is now called the "It Girl" and has a contract with ABS-CBN.

"I have no idea why they're calling me the It Girl," Nikki told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview. "I didn't plan on joining show biz. But I think God put me here for a reason and that, I think is to make a difference."

Nikki's mom Julie, former artist in an advertising agency and now a businesswoman, admitted that friends of the family were convincing them to stay away from show biz.

"All [that Nikki] wanted to do was to appear in one commercial," Julie said. "It took a lot to convince her dad (a vice president of Security Bank). He thought the same way that all parents thought. All parents feel it's a lion's den out there and we're like throwing our precious girl to the lions. All our friends said, no, no don't. But then... there are people who make their jobs in show biz ugly and there are people who make it decent. We'd like to give it our best shot. We reached a compromise with her dad, and that was for me to be Nikki's manager. So we're here."

Picture of youth

Before she became the Coke girl and the latest symbol of what it's like to be young, Nikki was in an honors course at the Ateneo de Manila, where she is now on minimum load. She graduated valedictorian from her Christian high school and was generally thought of as the girl most likely to make it.

Singing a Christmas cantata in the church choir, she was spotted by a talent caster who attended the same church, who asked her to audition for a commercial role. Along with a few hundred girls, Nikki tried out for the part and was cast in the big-budget TV ad of Coke, a global concept that took off from a UK commercial.

"It took a long time for them to decide which girl they wanted," Nikki recalled. "But the requirement was for a singing model."

Like most products with a stake on the youth market, Coke had to find a girl that had all the wholesome qualities that the Coke brand wanted to project. Apparently, Nikki fulfilled the casting requirement. In fact, she's too good to be true. But as they say in another Coke ad, Nikki's the real thing.

"I'M HERE for a reason."

"I've never had a boyfriend," said Nikki.

But in another interview, Martin Nievera revealed that his son Robin had been talking to Nikki for the past four years. The two went to the same Christian High School and have been close friends.

"Robin is such a romantic like me," Martin said. "He has been talking for four years with only one girl. That girl is Nikki Gil."

Whatever that means, Nikki appears to be keeping boys at bay.

"I want to show that it is possible to not have a boyfriend at a young age," she said.

Her choice of music is as clear cut as her ideas about dating.

"I like jazz and R&B and Disney songs," she said. "I don't know why I like Disney songs, but I like songs that are singable (melodic). I choose songs for their message. Some songs are not all singable and their message is blunt, like the values they convey are about sex and all that. My favorite singer is Alicia Keys."

"I wear clothes that are laid back. I like going around in capris and flip flops. I dress conservatively, but not too *balot* (wrapped up)."

In one production number for the TV variety show "ASAP," along with all the show's young girls, Nikki stood out as the only one who did not show her midriff, wearing a T-shirt that covered her body and hardly showed any skin.

"I will not show what I don't like people to touch," Nikki explained.

She admitted that being a role model for the youth, as she is aiming to be, could be a pressure.

"But it's a very positive pressure and I'll do everything I can to live up to that image," she vowed. "I will also stay enrolled in school. It will be tough, but that's the challenge I'm willing to take on."

Julie's choice

In signing up with ABS-CBN even if an offer also came from rival network GMA 7, Nikki's manager-mom considered the shows that were being offered to her daughter.

"She's a singer... ABS offered shows that would have her hosting and doing musical numbers."

That show biz can be unkind, Nikki also knows. "I'm prepared for that," she said. "I just hope that people who make *artistas*, the press, the media, will help keep the image that I have right now. Some *kasi*, they challenge the image."

She realizes she's going to need support.

"God will help me keep my sanity. Of course, I can't do it on my own," she said.

"I also have my mom to keep my feet on the ground. I have my father to help keep my priorities straight. God will make sure that I'm fulfilling the purpose of my being here."

She's the real thing ... no, she's too good to be true

BIKINI VOTING STARTS The public can now start voting for their favorite Mossimo Bikini Summit candidates by texting MBS to 2955 (Smart subscribers only). Candidates with the highest number of votes automatically qualify for the semi-finals. This year's finals is set April 30 at the Araneta Coliseum.

DID YOU KNOW...

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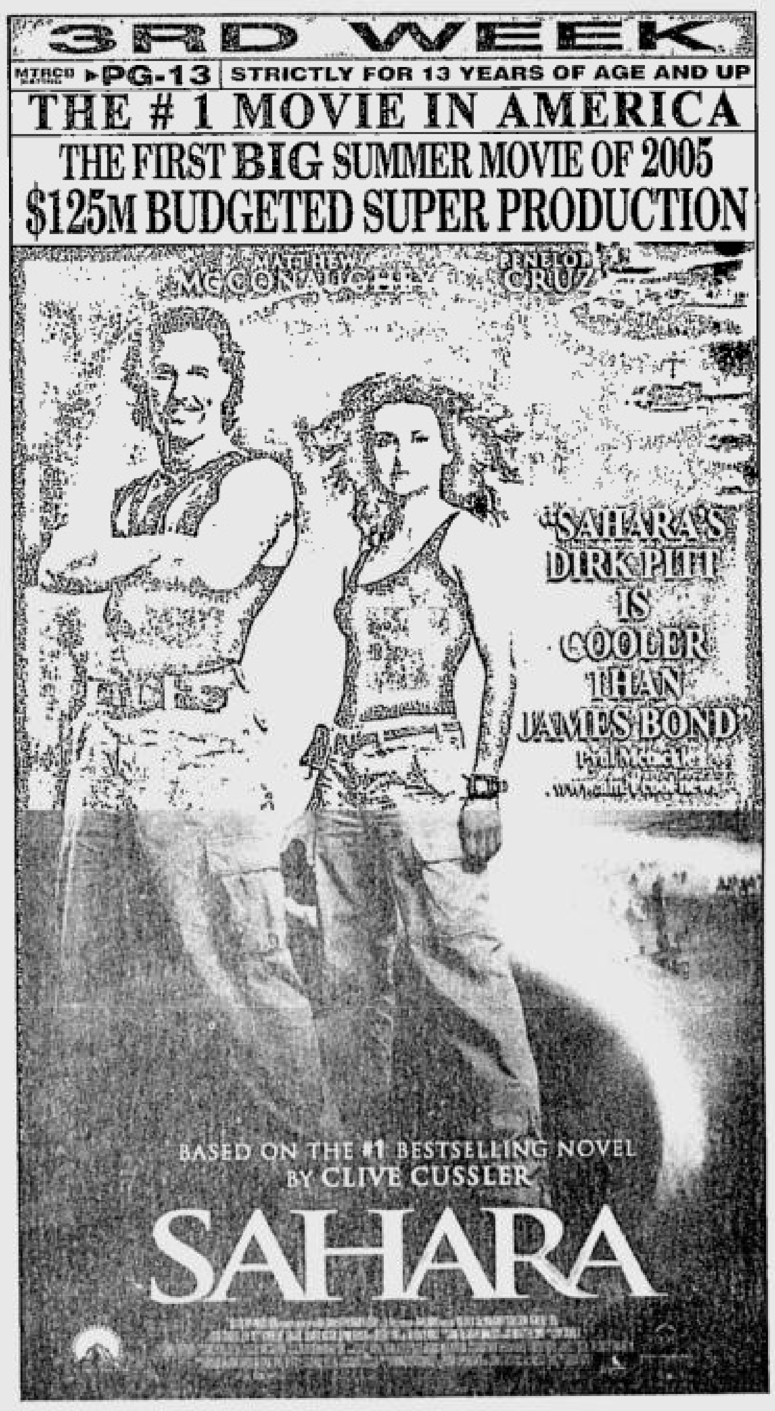

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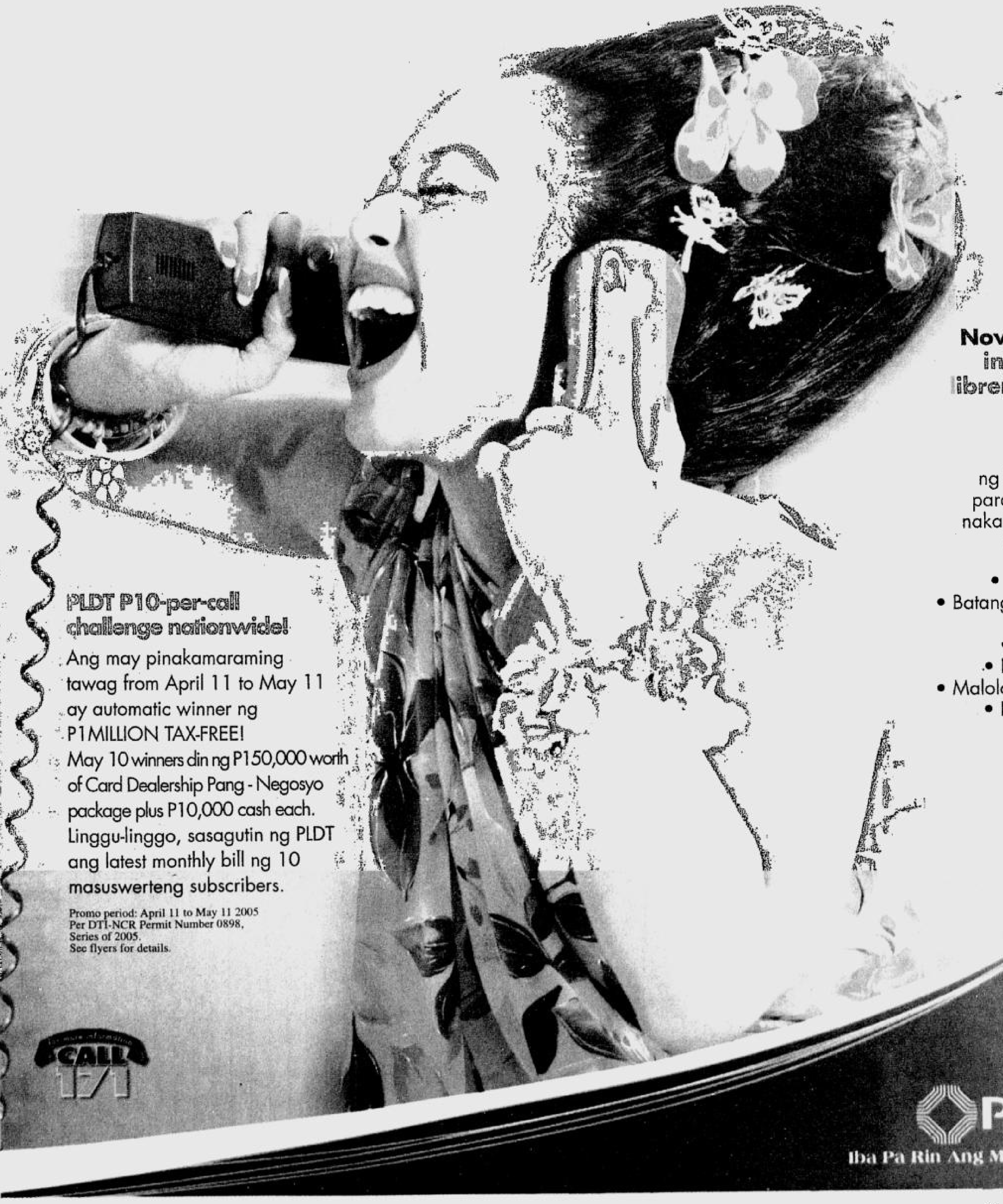

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SEC urged to probe Pacific Plans books

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE Secretary Cesar Purisima has called on the Securities and Exchange to investigate how the finances of pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. were handled to determine what forced the company to request for a suspension of payments to plan holders.

"The SEC should look beyond the rehabilitation plan and review all the filings of Pacific Plans in the past to check if it lived to its fiduciary responsibilities to the plan holders," Purisima said in a statement.

The finance chief suggested that the SEC check whether the company did not violate any provisions of the Securities Act and other related laws, and find out the liabilities of its officials and parent firm, the Yuchengco group. He also recommended that the SEC investigate inter-company transactions and representations.

The suggestion to make a thorough investigation of the Pacific Plan case followed concerns over the safety of plan holders' money, as the financial problem of another pre-need firm College Assurance Plan remains unresolved.

While Purisima was urging the SEC to investigate the case of Pacific Plans, he earlier supported the suggestion that the regulation of pre-need companies be transferred from the SEC to the Insurance Commission, an attached agency of the DOF.

The transfer of the regulation of the pre-need industry to the Insurance Commission has been proposed by some sectors, believing that pre-need and insurance were similar in nature.

Pacific Plans earlier filed for a suspension of payments and rehabilitation with a Makati City court, saying it may not be able to service tuition claims in the future.

Pacific Plan officials blamed the lifting of the 10-percent cap on tuition increases in 1990 for its fund problems.

But the pre-need firm, which has 34,000 plan holders, said it could still service claims for the coming schoolyear.

The company said in its rehabilitation petition that it had P341 million in cash for the coming enrollment period. It said that while its ability to pay future claims was doubtful, it could return the money paid by the plan holders, plus a net return of 7 percent a year from the date the plan was fully paid.

PURISIMA

P5.2-B expansion of SMC unit gets incentives

By Clarissa S. Batino

SAN Miguel Yamamura Asia Corp., a joint venture of the local food and beverage giant and a Japanese glass manufacturer, is undertaking a P5.2-billion expansion of its plant in Imus, Cavite.

The Board of Investments approved last week the company's application for tax incentives covering the upgrade of the facility.

The two-phase expansion will be completed in 2007. The upgrade will allow the company to hire 157 more workers and produce more bottles.

San Miguel Corp. owns 60 percent of the venture while the remaining 40 percent is controlled by Japanese firm Nihon Yamamura Glass Co. Ltd.

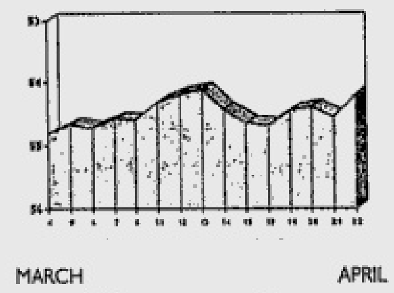
The local venture produces mostly bottles for packaging of consumer products, including those manufactured by the local food and beverage conglomerate. San Miguel and Nihon Yamamura have three other partnerships

P52.5-B/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



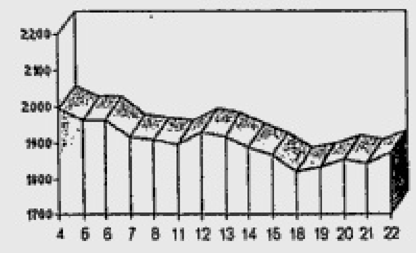
P54.17 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 22, 2005

¥106.52 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 22, 2005

GOLD: $433.30-433.80
per ounce Hong Kong, April 22, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Listless trading seen

LISTLESS trading is expected this week as market players await the passage of, and the form that will be taken by, the value-added tax bill in Congress.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange composite index last week rose 4.07 points to 1,868.13 on bargain-hunting and Wall Street's late rally.

Eagle Equities Inc. president Joey Roxas said the market might remain lethargic due to delays in the passage of the VAT bill.

The VAT measure remains deadlocked in the bicameral conference committee, which is trying to reconcile the versions of the Senate and the House. The Arroyo administration has been pushing for an increase in the VAT rate to 12 percent from 10 percent as well as the lifting of exemptions enjoyed by several sectors.

BPI Trade said in its weekly report that the dearth of fresh positive news and the uncertainty on the final version of the VAT bill now pending with the bicameral committee pulled the Phisix to a new year's low.

An analyst from a local brokerage firm also said that the outlook on Asian stock markets was mixed over the same uncertainty about monetary policy in the United States.

LISTLESS/ B6

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Gov't seeks ways to boost geothermal investments

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy is proposing that the country's geothermal resources be classified as mineral resources to enable foreign entities to invest in the geothermal sector.

"This would allow the utilization of geothermal resources to be made on the same basis as the rest of the mining industry. We have precedents for this in other areas of the world and would not be violative of the Constitution," Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said.

"In the Philippines, this would allow the entry of much-needed capital for the fullest utilization of the country's geothermal resources on the same terms that the Supreme Court has recognized for the mining sector," he added.

Under the current set-up, firms wanting to invest in the development of the country's geothermal resources have to be at least 60-percent Filipino-owned.

If geothermal resources would be considered mineral resources, then 100-percent foreign firms could invest in the sector.

The Supreme Court late last year reversed a landmark decision it made in January 2004 that declared RA 7942, or the Philippine Mining Act, unconstitutional.

The Mining Act had allowed foreign firms to invest in mining projects in the country, but the constitutionality of this provision was challenged in court.

The reversal of the Supreme Court decision spurred the local mining industry, even boosting the share prices of many dormant mining issues on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Having the country's geothermal resources covered by laws similar to the Mining Act would likely result in a surge in new investments in the sector, Lotilla said.

The Philippines is currently the world's second biggest producer of geothermal energy, with an installed capacity of 2,146 megawatts (MW) in 2005, according to the DOE's updated Philippine Energy Plan (PEP) for 2005-2014.

For the country to achieve its goal of displacing the United States as the biggest geothermal energy producer in the world, the PEP said the sector would need P78.8 billion in new investments.

For Luzon exploration and development, P37.4 billion in investments will be required. For the Visayas, the amount needed is P27.1 billion, while in Mindanao, the infusion required is P14.3 billion.

These new investments would fund the optimization or expansion of existing geothermal plants and fields as well as the exploration and development of new areas.

Lotilla's geothermal-as-mineral-resource proposal would be included in the draft Renewable Energy bill that he had ordered reviewed in 30 days. The review would evaluate the constitutionality and the economic necessity of defining geothermal resources as mineral resources.

When elephants make love

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

YOU'VE heard the saying, "When elephants fight, the ants get trampled." It continues, "And when elephants make love, the ants get trampled as well." Lately, these sayings have become relevant for us small economies in Southeast Asia as we witness current developments involving China, Japan and India, the acknowledged "elephants" among the economies in this part of the world.

Mating elephants

For all our claims to being among the most globalized people in the world, Filipinos still seem to be too inward-looking to notice or give due importance to a recent event that is bound to reshape the world economy. This paper's lead editorial about a week ago (PDI, 4/17/05) dealt on the subject, i.e. the landmark April 11 accord signed in New Delhi during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's official visit to the Indian capital. The pact calls for enhanced diplomatic and economic ties, embarks on a "strategic partnership for peace and prosperity," and provides that "neither side shall use or threaten to use force against the other by any means." Both committed to move toward establishing a free trade area (FTA) between them. With a combined population of 2.3 billion, it would be the biggest free-trade bloc in the world. Initially, their target is to boost bilateral trade to $20 billion by 2008, from $13.6 last year. Specific elements include major liberalization of air links, facilitation of export of grapes and bitter gourd (yes, our lowly *ampalaya*!) from India to China, launch of an India-China financial dialogue, and bilateral exchanges in the entertainment sector including feature, documentary and animation films.

Should we ants worry that these elephants are "making love"?

Trade creation, diversion

Any trade accord that brings down import barriers among the signing countries leads to two key effects. One is trade creation, whereby lower tariffs lead each member country to source more of certain products from cheaper producers in the free-trade partners, rather than rely on more costly domestic producers.

The other effect is trade diversion, where the member-countries turn away from cheaper (and more efficient) producers in non-member countries to higher cost producers from the free trade partner. Freed from import tariffs, the latter can become a cheaper, more attractive source even if its production costs are higher than in a non-member country, whose products remain subject to tariffs that make them artificially more expensive. The higher the prevailing tariffs on non-member countries, the more trade diversion is likely to occur.

The relevant question for us and our neighbors is, are there products we are currently selling to either China and/or India that they are likely to stop buying or at least buy less from us, because they can now get them more cheaply from the other? A scan of our trade data with either country shows that the most dominant exports we sell to both countries are industrial products, especially electronic components, which account for 76 percent of our exports to China, and 27 percent of exports to India. We have also been selling various agricultural and mineral products to China, feeding raw materials and intermediate inputs into its bustling industrial sector. Our exports to India are more varied, and include various consumer manufactures, machinery, transport equipment, and resource-based products especially minerals and natural rubber.

Strategic thinking

While we have been enjoying a significant trade surplus with China in recent years ($277.5 million in 2003, $33.9 million in 2004), there is real danger that this could turn into a deficit if India manages to edge out some of our exports to China, especially in electronics. They are not likely to edge us out in the agri- and resource-based exports we currently sell to China; at least, I am not aware that we are exporting ampalaya to the Chinese, or that they are selling bananas to the Chinese. As for India, we have been running a trade deficit ($211.4 million in 2003, $206.8 million in 2004) which could widen further if cheaper Chinese manufactures edge out ours from the Indian market. With China's much cheaper labor, this is not unlikely; they have already been edging out our manufacturers from our own domestic market! Thus, what we ought to be doing even now is to identify and focus on strategic products in which a China-India FTA would help, rather than hamper, our exports to either country—that is, products that either of them are unlikely to get from the other even under the coming FTA between them.

Quarreling elephants

Meanwhile, another development we ought to watch closely is the ongoing tension between China and Japan. Again, our media and the Filipino public haven't seemed to show much concern about the fact that there is apparently escalating antagonism and violence within China against Japanese persons and establishments in recent weeks, due to sensitivities on Japan's alleged "whitewashing" of their war crimes in their new history books. Some even speculate that the Filipino family attacked in Tiananmen Square by a Chinese assailant (leading to the unfortunate death of two of the family members) may have been mistaken for Japanese. This is a quarrel that must not escalate further, as we "ants" are bound to be on the losing end of economic disruptions in either of the quarreling "elephants." With Japan being a dominant trading partner and investment source for us, and China rapidly emerging so as well, we would do well to help play a mediating role in this needless conflict. After all, we've had a lot of practice with conflicts in our own home ground (not that we've been particularly successful in mediating them, especially lately). But I'd much rather be a flea feasting on these elephants' legs, rather than an ant getting crushed under them.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

₱5.2-B expansion of SMC unit gets incentives

From page B1

in similar ventures.

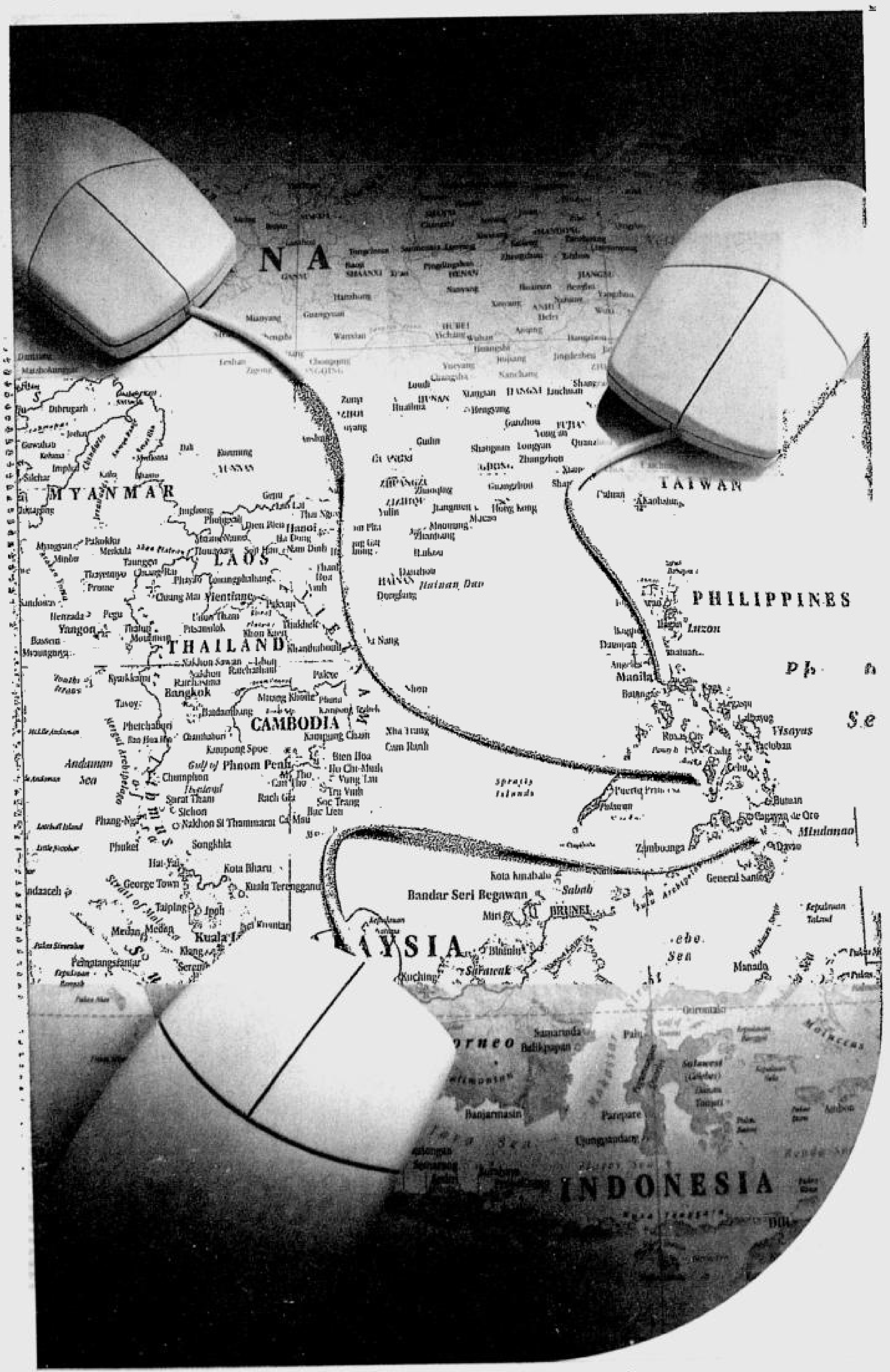
The company will upgrade the capacity of its plant in Imus in two phases to cope with the projected demand for bottles over the next three to five years.

To cost P3.7 billion, the first phase will entail the construction of a glass container facility while the next phase will expand the capacity of the glass containers.

Since 1992, the company has produced 133 bottle designs, of which 60 percent are still in active production list. The company introduces about eight new products a year.

"Food product is one of the top five non-traditional Philippine exports and we intend to develop it further by giving incentives to firms that support the industry," Trade Secretary Juan Santos said in a statement.

He said the expansion of the local firm was in line with the trade department's thrust of developing the food industry.



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JAZA takes BPI cut

BANK of the Philippine Islands has found a way to rein in executive compensation and keep the package within competitive levels—the bank dropped its chair from the executive rolls.

Starting this year, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, the chair of the country's oldest and second biggest bank, is no longer part of the top five salaried executives, unlike the previous years, according to its recently released 2004 annual report.

This, plus the retirement of long-time president Xavier Loinaz, will cause the estimated 2005 salaries and bonuses of the Top Five led by new president/CEO Aurelio Montinola III to plunge to P72 million, from P107.5 million in 2004 and P89.6 million in 2003.

"BPI's net income grew by an average of 8.3 percent over the last three years due to higher revenues and well-managed overhead," the bank said in its report to stakeholders.

The total compensation for the BPI's 15-member board, meanwhile, dropped to P27 million in 2004 from P37 million in 2003, the last year with Jaime Zobel de Ayala, JAZA's father, as chair. Total board compensation was P26 million the year before.

It was not immediately clear why the Zobel heir had been excluded from the executive compensation list. Loinaz, who retired end-2004 but remains in the BPI board, was surprised and could offer no explanation when informed of the change.

BPI last year granted Ayala Corp., the Zobel holding company, a P2.95-billion loan, but it is not clear whether the grant had any correlation to the compensation withdrawal.

Cosmos losing fizz

JOSE Concepcion III took some heat from his relatives when he sold the publicly listed Cosmos Bottling to the San Miguel Group in January 2002.

Three years hence, Joey could be having the last laugh.

Since the San Miguel/Coca Cola boys took over, Cosmos sales have been flat after posting a first-year spike, thanks to a November 2001 price increase implemented by Concepcion, while profitability has been steadily going down.

Net profit last year skidded to P204.37 million, from P858 million in 2002. But over half of 2002 profit, P480 million, was due to a one-time accounting gain by way of share transfer from the company's landholding company.

In contrast, in 2001, the last full year of the Concepcion rule, the country's first soft drinks manufacturing company posted P672.6 million in net profit.

To keep administrative and operating costs down, the new Cosmos bosses shut down six of the 12 bottling plants and instituted an early retirement program. And, in the hope of boosting sales, the company appointed in February a new national sales and marketing director, Regnault Santos, formerly of Islacom.

Among Santos' urgent tasks--keep the mounting doubtful accounts down. Amid a determined sales push last year, doubtful receivables more than doubled to P204 million, from P90 million in 2003.

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Money-go-round

- CHINABANK executives, led by chair Gilbert Dee and president/CEO Peter Dee, are being rewarded this year with an 8-percent salary increase, after posting a 14.37-percent return on equity to their shareholders last year.
- RESIGNED PNB president Lorenzo Tan has accepted an offer from SunLife Philippines to become its president/CEO, beginning June.

Heard through the grapevine

THE DAIKIN-ALEN joint venture has been placed under receivership, amid charges by the Filipino partner Alfredo Lagman Jr. that the Japanese management sabotaged the five-year-old venture and the local Alenaire air conditioners while allowing the parallel importation of Daikin units through its former dealer, Hyatt Industries of Johnny Yu.

From P427-million profit in 1997, Alen started posting annual losses in the second year after folding in the company with the Japanese-led joint venture.

Former SEC commissioner Danilo Concepcion has been appointed receiver.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Globe Telecom, PLDT extend fixed-line unlimited promo

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom Inc. have extended call-all-you-can, within-network price promo nationwide for their fixed-line subscribers by another month.

Globelines 30-day "NDD Ka Na Magbabayad," which was supposed to end on April 19 was extended to May 20 following strong feedback from its subscribers.

PLDT's P10-per call "Telebabad" promo was again extended to May 11. It was launched last Feb. 14.

PLDT's wireless units Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. resumed last Friday their unlimited 25/8 deals for prepaid subscribers.

The P10 call rate applies to all PLDT calls anywhere in the country as well as to all Smart and Talk N' Text mobile subscribers regardless of the length of the call. PLDT has more than 22 million fixed-line and wireless customers all over the country.

Smart and Talk N' Text are again offering buffet pricing of P115 for unlimited calls for seven days and P60 for unlimited text for four days.

In a bid to avoid congesting their network that currently accommodates more than 19 million subscribers daily, Smart and Talk N' Text are imposing a cap on the length of the unlimited calls to no more than three minutes during peak hours and a maximum of 10 minutes each call during off-peak hours of 11 p.m. to 7 am.

Sun Cellular's 24/7 is now offering a two-day unlimited call and text deal for P20.

For Globe, the deal is that new customers who would sign up for Globelines until May 20 would enjoy free calls to any fixed-line Globe subscriber anywhere in the country for the duration of the subscription.

Some 300,000 Globelines postpaid subscribers already enjoy the benefits of "NDD Ka na Magbabayad."

Subscribers just need to call the customer care hotline numbers for Luzon, Visayas or Mindanao to avail themselves of the promo. They can also drop by the nearest Globelines Payments and Services Business Center.

"What our subscribers truly appreciate about this promo is that it is very simple and easy to use and avail of, in addition to their having experienced the many benefits of free NDD calls," said Globelines marketing head Jose Antonio Mapa Jr.

Globe's postpaid landline monthly subscription costs between P250 and P700 for residential customers and between P300 and P1,200 for businesses. Rates in provinces are cheaper than in the metropolis.

In Metro Manila, the monthly rate for Globe landline is P650.

"Globelines delivers real benefits to its subscribers. Strengthening the family's bond and optimizing a business' operations through reliable communications and quality service at affordable cost are the major benefits we give to our customers," Mapa added.

PLDT had indicated plans to make its P10 "Telebabad" rate as a permanent pricing strategy to encourage more people to use the landline.

"They like the product's simplicity and affordable price," said PLDT head of retail Butch Jimenez.

Jimenez said calls to PLDT's customer service hotline, 171, have increased from 5,000 a day to more than 35,000. Most inquiries were related to the P10-per-call deal.

The PLDT retail head said there had been a strong uptake in applications for PLDT landlines as well.

Jimenez added that provincial cities serviced by other carriers have passed local resolutions encouraging PLDT to enter their city. Individual subscribers from competing landline players nationwide are likewise requesting for connections to PLDT to avail themselves of the P10-per-call offer.

He said three weeks after the promo started on Feb. 14, the number of calls using PLDT lines jumped to an average of 540,000 a day from about 390,000 before the P10 call rate.

The number of callers also grew by 46 percent to an average of 146,000 a day.

N. Ecija bank gets BSP emergency line

By Doris C. Dumlao
and Elizabeth Sanchez

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has given Nueva Ecija-based Merchants Rural Bank of Talavera Inc., an affiliate of the defunct Rural Bank of San Miguel, a P100-million emergency credit line to cope with its cash flow problems.

But banking sources said the BSP had released only about P28 million to Merchants Bank so far, representing the amount covered by collateral committed to the banking regulator.

"They have a P100-million credit line but the amount they can actually get will depend on how much assets can be given as collateral," one banking source said.

Another banking source said Merchants Bank was seeking to obtain more loans from the BSP to maximize the credit line.

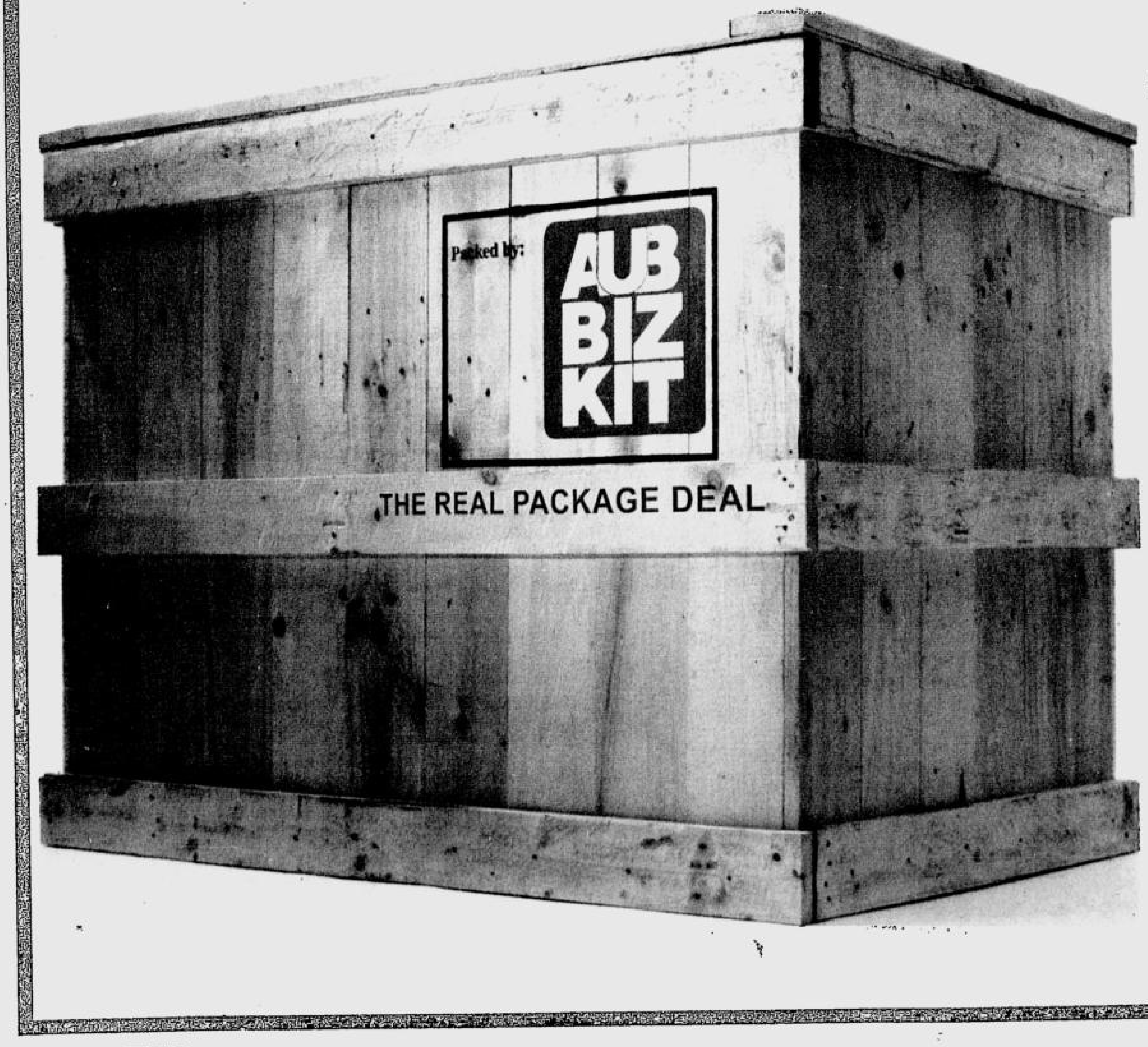
The rural bank, in a previous meeting with the BSP, also pledged that a new investor was buying in to help resolve its liquidity problems.

Merchants Bank operates eight branches. It was recently hit by a spate of heavy withdrawals.

Based on Merchant Bank's amended articles of incorporation filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1981, the bank's owners were Dominador Ferry, Engacia Maliwat-Ferry, Artemio Valenton, Teodosio Valenton and David Pangilinan.

In a separate court document obtained by the INQUIRER, however, the

N. ECIJA/B4



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N. Ecija bank gets . . .

From page B3

owner of the defunct RBSM Hilario Soriano now claimed to be the principal owner of Merchants Bank.

In a pleading signed by legal counsels Sedfrey Ordoñez and Lamberto Gonzales dated Sept. 27, 2003, contesting a hold departure order filed against Soriano, the investments in Merchants Bank and another holding company, Soriano Holdings Corp., were cited as among the compelling reasons for his presence in the country.

As of that date, the same court documents claimed Merchants Bank had total assets of P400 million.

But despite its current financial woes, Merchants Bank was not planning to declare any bank holiday nor suspend operations. The president of Merchants Bank also assured the BSP that there were no anomalies in the bank's operation and that it was simply hit by a cash flow mismatch due to heavy withdrawals.

Affiliate bank RSBM, once the biggest bank in Bulacan, went on a bank holiday in January 2000 and was eventually shut down by the BSP.

Meanwhile, the BSP clarified that another bank using the trade name "Merchant Bank", Merchants Savings and Loan Association Inc. (MSLAI), was not related to the Merchants Bank that was having cash flow problems.

The BSP, in an official statement yesterday, said that although both Merchants Bank and MSLAI were both using the same name in their signages, these were different entities and completely unrelated to each other.

"MSLAI or Merchants Bank, the thrift bank which has 21 branches nationwide, is fully capitalized at P487 million and has not been experiencing liquidity problems," the BSP said.

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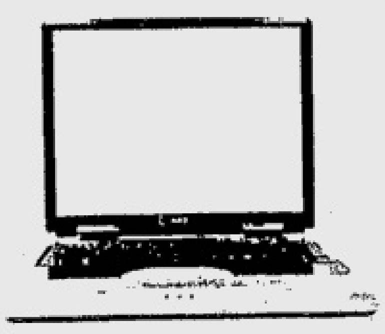

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Banana traders want slice of $70-M Aussie market

By Christine A. Gaylican

BANANA producers and exporters will extend technical and financial support to the government in order to export fresh bananas to Australia and corner its lucrative $70-million market.

The Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA) has given their commitment to support the Department of Agriculture (DA) in its effort to persuade banana growers in Australia to accept the Philippine product.

The growers in Australia have vowed to block Philippine banana exports.

Francisco Lorenzo, senior vice president of PBGEA member-company Lapanday Foods Corp. and general manager for plantation and agricultural operations segments, on Friday said that they would help provide the scientific and technical documents that would support the country's legitimate claims.

According to the Segfredo Serrano, DA undersecretary for policy and planning, the agency will file a new petition letter with the World Trade Organization to pressure Australia to open up its market and provide an indicative timeline in reviewing the export of Philippine bananas.

"We will assert our rights at the WTO because it seems the Australians are not taking us seriously," Serrano told reporters.

The Australian Parliament still has not issued a final decision on the Philippine banana export application. Philippine officials fear that the Australian authorities will rule in favor of their banana growers.

"Competitive pricing appears to be the major factor in the lobby against Mindanao bananas since Philippine imports are pegged at $2.60 per 13-kilo box as against Australian bananas that are at roughly $12 a box," Lorenzo said.

Serrano said bananas were an important agricultural product export. The Philippine banana industry is currently supporting rebel returnees and marginalized farmers in Mindanao.

"(Banana production and trade) is a parallel track in pursuing peace and development in Mindanao," Serrano added.

The Philippines is now the second largest banana producer in the world. Farms in Mindanao can efficiently produce Cavendish bananas, averaging 10,000 tons of bananas per hectare a year, said Senen Bacani, chairman and CEO of La Fruitera Inc., the sixth largest exporter.

Shipment of fresh bananas, particularly the Philippine cavendish variety, to different countries moved up by 3.4 percent to 1.74 million metric tons in 2004, generating about P2 billion, according to data obtained from the PBGEA and the Department of Trade and Industry.

The growth could be attributed to higher demand in Japan, the Middle East and Hong Kong.

Demand from other markets such as South Korea and China declined by 8 and 11 percent, respectively, compared to the volume that had been shipped in 2003.

Gov't cuts payment lag to one month

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Budget and Management has already settled the bulk of its liabilities to government suppliers and contractors, after the government last year posted a lower-than-expected deficit.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said it has reduced its payment lag to only one month from the previous four months. This means that what the DBM only has to pay are liabilities that the government incurred a month ago.

"I think one month is already the best we can do," she told reporters. "Even many private companies do not pay (suppliers of goods or services) earlier than one month."

She said the improvement in the government's payment was made possible after it posted a budget deficit last year of only P187 billion, or about P11 billion lower than the official deficit target of P197.8 billion.

The P11 billion was the amount spent in settling the bulk of government's liabilities.

Meanwhile, expenditures was earlier reported to have reached P236.1 billion in the first quarter. The expenditure figure led to a deficit of P63.5 billion in the period, as revenues only stood at P172.6 billion.

Boncodin said the relatively high expenditure in the first quarter was partly brought about by the assumption of P7.1 billion in debts of state-owned National Power Corp.

The government decided to assume P200 billion of Napocor debts, although this will be done in a staggered basis over the medium term.

For 2005, the government is scheduled to assume P18.1 billion in interest liabilities of Napocor.

For the first quarter, the government paid off P7.1 billion of the P18.1 billion.

The P63.5 billion deficit in the first quarter means that the government has to either tighten spending or increase revenue collection in each of the three remaining quarters of the year to achieve the deficit target of only P180 billion for the whole of 2005.

This is because the first quarter deficit only allows the government to post as much as P114.7 billion deficit for the three remaining quarters, or P38.2 billion for each of the quarters.

The DOF has expressed confidence that, despite the assumption of Napocor debts, the government will still be able to achieve its fiscal targets this year and in the next four years.

The government is hoping that the deficit will hit P180 billion this year, or about P7 billion lower than last year's.

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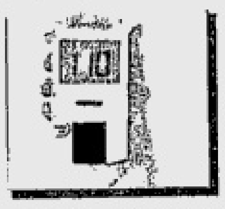
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PPI in talks with foreign firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PRE-NEED firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI) of the Yuchengco family is in talks with a foreign financial institution to set up funds that may be used to purchase the converted fixed-value plans of PPI plan holders under the pre-need firm's money-back program.

Early this month, a Makati regional trial court allowed PPI to suspend payments and undergo rehabilitation. The firm told the Makati court that it had run out of cash and might not be able to pay future claims.

PPI has announced that it can only pay P341 million for the present enrollment period.

In its petition for rehabilitation, PPI's obligation to availing plan holders is pegged at P350 million for the May to June 2005 enrollment period.

PPI has 34,000 plan holders, 16,000 of whom have filed for educational claims for the schoolyear 2005-2006.

PPI is now offering to return its plan holders' payments by issuing fixed-value plans.

"The liquidity fund we are trying to put up is another option for our plan holders for ready cash," the company said in a statement. "[The plan holders] don't have to look around for a buyer because it will be a ready buyer."

PPI also said it wants to address the needs of some of its plan holders to convert to cash their fixed-value plans which will mature in July 2010.

For those who can wait until 2010, the company said the plans will earn upon maturity 7 percent in compounded interest, excluding charges.

These plans are backed up by government bonds which are among the safest investment instruments around, PPI said.

The fixed-value plans will be issued after the Makati court approves the planned rehabilitation of PPI.

According to the company, it wants to be fair to all its plan holders in disbursing its remaining P341 million. It has imposed a ceiling for tuition support at P22,000 per semester for those enrolled in non-exclusive schools, and P28,000 for those in exclusive schools.

PPI is hoping interested investors will infuse P300 million into PPI as part of working capital.

"We will talk with anybody who are serious in getting into the company," PPI spokesperson Jeanette Tecson said.

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SMIC MAKES SINGLE BIGGEST TAX PAYMENT

Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo L. Parayno, Jr. (middle) receives from SM Investments Corp. (SMIC) vice chair Teresita T. Sy (fifth from left) a P1.15-billion check as tax payment for SMIC's initial public offering held last month. Parayno has described the payment as the single biggest paycheck the agency has received.

Kirin Brewery gets 3rd seat in SMC board

SAN MIGUEL Corp. (SMC) management will turn over a third board seat to Japan's Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd., firming up the Japanese investor's stake in the food and beverage giant's 15-man board.

In a proxy statement, Kirin executive Kazuhiro Sato, is expected to replace Manuel Cojuangco, brother of SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. in the SMC board.

The announcement will be made during the stockholder's meeting next month.

Kirin has two seats in SMC, represented by Hitoshi Oshima and Yoshinori Isozaki.

The SMC management will be represented in three board seats, with Cojuangco as chair, Ramon Ang as SMC president, and Estelito Mendoza as legal counsel.

SMC management used to hold four seats.

Industry sources said Kirin's added seat in the board would have no effect on SMC's balance of power since the Kirin Group is said to be allied with Cojuangco.

Businessman Iñigo Zobel and SM Investments Corp.'s Henry Sy Jr. are expected to remain as independent directors.

The government will also keep its seven seats through the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System.

The PCGG accounts for five seats, each has one seat.

Kirin, one of Japan's largest breweries, bought P5.14 billion in additional shares in SMC early this month, increasing its stake to 20 percent from 19.67 percent.

SMC recently raised P17.8 billion from a recent stock rights offering.

To acquire one board seat, one needs to hold roughly a 6.6 percent stake in SMC.

Also last January, Kirin increased its stake to 19.67 percent, reflecting the Japanese brewer's firm vote of confidence in the beer giant's long-term strategy. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 22, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	27,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	25.5	26.5	25.5	26.5	170,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	48	49	48	48.5	2,073,400
China Banking Corp.	655	655	655	655	300
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	1,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.7	0.71	0.68	0.7	5,270,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46.5	47	46.5	47	2,200
International Exch. Bank	18	18.25	18	18.25	94,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31.5	32	482,000
Philippine National Bank	31	31.5	31	31.5	89,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	4,800
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	232,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	28.5	29	28.5	29	400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	1.9	1.92	1.9	1.92	46,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	781,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1630	1650	1630	1645	940
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	17,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	5,681,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	830	850	830	850	64,470
Ipeople Inc.	4	4.2	4	4.1	33,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.05	2.1	2.06	2.1	44,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	1,755,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1355	1380	1335	1335	262,810
Ivantage Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	300,000
Philweb Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	4,800,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	15,100
Manila Electric Co. B	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	454,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	1,975,000
Petron Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.55	697,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.22	1.12	1.2	158,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	50,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7	7	7	7	585,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	130,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.64	300,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3	3.1	3	3.05	385,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	10,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	11,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	43,700
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57.5	57.5	61,700
San Miguel Corp. B	82	82.5	82	82.5	28,300
Universal Robina Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	40,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	18,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.9	7	6.9	7	6,357,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	130,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.25	4.25	4.2	4.2	30,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.04	0.043	0.04	0.043	4,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.94	2.02	1.94	2	236,000
APC Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.32	0.35	3,050,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.42	60,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	13,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	15,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.175	3,520,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.02	8,440,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	340,000
CADP Group Corp.	1	1	1	1	1,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.235	0.24	0.235	0.24	1,740,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,000,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3	3.25	3	3.2	5,562,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	500,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9	9	8.9	8.9	109,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	45.5	44.5	44.5	470,300
Global Equities Inc.	0.0975	0.0975	0.085	0.09	5,500,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	96,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.82	1.86	1.82	1.86	98,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.36	926,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.42	0.44	0.42	0.43	20,520,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	40,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.94	0.94	100,000
Solid Group, Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	50,000
SM Investments Corp.	246	247	243	247	1,235,280
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	1,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.235	0.24	0.23	0.23	65,510,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.27	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	13,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	50,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.115	0.12	0.11	0.11	1,820,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.18	9,385,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.92	560,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.52	1.6	1.52	1.6	2,672,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	11,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	970,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.25	512,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	28,485,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.87	0.85	0.87	330,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.29	1,320,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	650,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.42	0.42	5,640,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.48	1.44	1.48	2,246,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	700,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.6	670,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.5	7.3	7.4	3,585,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	17,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5	5	5	5	10,000
Benguet Corp. A	7	7	7	7	5,000
Benguet Corp. B	20	20.5	20	20.5	5,600
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	2,110,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	7,860,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.016	34,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	99,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	14,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98	760,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	2,225,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	37	37.5	36.5	37	116,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	10,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	35,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	56,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	32,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.17	0.185	0.17	0.185	1,200,000

CURRENCIES

April 22, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.765931	1.000000	54.3690
Japan	Yen	0.007165	0.009355	0.5086
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462469	1.909400	103.8122
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098206	0.128218	6.9711
Switzerland	Franc	0.647777	0.845737	45.9819
Canada	Dollar	0.618434	0.807428	43.8991
Singapore	Dollar	0.464680	0.606686	32.9849
Australia	Dollar	0.593745	0.775194	42.1465
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.031756	2.652661	144.2225
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204243	0.266660	14.4980
Brunei	Dollar	0.463274	0.604851	32.8851
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000079	0.000103	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.019351	0.025265	1.3736
UAE	Dirham	0.208542	0.272272	14.8032
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.305600	70.9842
Argentina	Peso	0.264342	0.345125	18.7641
Brazil	Real	0.300542	0.392388	21.3337
Denmark	Kroner	0.134235	0.175257	9.5285
India	Rupee	0.017535	0.022894	1.2447
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.201588	0.263193	14.3095
Mexico	New Peso	0.069529	0.090777	4.9355
New Zealand	Dollar	0.556595	0.726691	39.5095
Norway	Kroner	0.122700	0.160197	8.7098
Korea	Won	0.000760	0.000992	0.0539
Syria	Pound	0.014755	0.019264	1.0474
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024308	0.031736	1.7255

Listless trading . . .

From page B1

"In the US, investors are worried about economic data that are coming out because they are unsure over the direction that the Federal Reserve will be taking. On the one hand, aggregate demand indicators such as consumption seems to point to a slowing down, but inflation figures are pointing to an acceleration in prices. So uncertain is the outlook and difficult to read, and this is spilling over to the region," the analyst said.

However, BPI Trade said that with the market reaching basement levels, bargain hunters came in and provided some support.

Leading the market higher were Globe Telecom, Philippine National Bank, Ginebra San Miguel, Ayala Corp., DMCI Holdings, Ayala Land, Petron, SM Prime Holdings, Filinvest Land, JG Summit Holdings, Lepanto Mining , Megaworld Corp., Digitel and Metro Pacific Corp.

Weighing down the market were PLDT, First Holdings, Meralco, San Miguel, Aboitiz Equity Ventures, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., Holcim Philippines, Belle Corp., ICTSI, Music Corp. and Ionics Inc. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	Please Call	1,000,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,100,000	1,050,000
Baguio Country Club	550,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Camp John Hay	175,000	-
Canlubang	-	450,000
Canyon Woods	140,000	-
Capitol Hills	95,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,900,000	-
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	80,000
Club Filipino	150,000	100,000
Eagleridge "A"	200,000	180,000
Eagleridge "B"	290,000	-
Eagleridge "C"	300,000	-
Fairways "C3"	-	300,000
Forest Hills "A"	140,000	100,000
Forest Hills "B"	180,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	240,000	170,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,500,000	Please Call
Manila Golf (Individual)	11,400,000	Please Call
Manila Polo	2,250,000	2,050,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	400,000	350,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	-	700,000
Manila Yacht Club	400,000	300,000
Metroclub "A"	150,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	200,000	130,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	330,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	250,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	300,000	180,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	450,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	-
Rockwell	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	650,000	500,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	-
Sta. Elena "B"	1,300,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	170,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	100,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	400,000	370,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	700,000
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	650,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	120,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	-
Valley Golf	300,000	230,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,700,000	6,300,000

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Alta Vista A/B*	250,000	-
Baguio Country Club	Pls. Call	500,000
Calatagan Golf	40,000	-
Camp John Hay	Pls. Call	-
Canyon Woods	140,000	-
Capitol Hills	100,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls Call	-
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu	Pls Call	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	200,000/230,000*/Pls. Call**	-
Eastridge A/B*	130,000	85,000*
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	130,000/160,000*/280,000**	110,000/160,000*
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls Call	-
Manila Polo	Pls Call	2,000,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	Pls Call*	370,000/700,000*
Makati Sports Club	210,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	120,000/170,000*	100,000
Mimosa C2/C3*	220,000	260,000*
Mt. Malarayat A/B*	190,000	180,000
Orchard A/B*/C**	280,000*	270,000*/330,000**
Puerto Azul	60,000	-
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	120,000/180,000*	180,000**
Riviera Sports	45,000	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls Call	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/110,000*/160,000**	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,200,000/1,600,000*	Pls. Call
The Palms Country Club	550,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	Pls Call	370,000
Tagaytay Highlands	Pls Call	-
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	680,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	120,000	-
Valley Golf	280,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls Call	Pls. Call

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GMA unit sees 20% growth in '05

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA NEW Media Inc., a unit of GMA Network Inc., is projecting a 20 percent growth in its finances this year from the 2004 profit level of P25 million.

In 2004, the GMA unit earned P120 million in revenue, its top official said.

GMA New Media is the subsidiary in charge of interactive and multi-media entertainment as well as research and development of new products for new technologies.

New Media has tie-ups with telco companies to encourage viewers and phone subscribers to text GMA stars, join television contests, participate in mobile gaming, download tones and images, and others.

Of the fee ranging from P2.50 to P15 each, depending on the product, the telcos get 70 percent and the network ends up with 30 percent.

New Media generates about 600,000 to a million hits a day, according to Judd Gallares, the company president.

Among the GMA subsidiaries, New Media is the biggest contributor to the network last year, Gallares said.

GMA Network registered profits of P1.5 billion in 2004 from about a billion pesos in 2003. Now the country's most profitable broadcast company, GMA derives most of its earnings from advertising on its highly rated shows.

Gallares said that New Media's performance in the first quarter was affected by the telco price war.

"I think our revenues dropped by about 20 to 25 percent during the first quarter due to the price war," he said. "As a result, subscribers opted to focus on text messaging because of the unlimited price and less on value-added services."

Still, the company would grow by at least 20 percent this year as the company gets more external clients like Cartoon Network, Solar Interactive, Regal Films and others, the New Media president said.

At present, New Media is studying the feasibility of going into new technologies like Mobile TV and Visual radio, Gallares said.

Visual radio and Mobile TV are two new multimedia trends that phone manufacturers like Nokia would like to launch over the next two years.

LTO: 3-year registration for brand new cars

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

LAST Jan. 3, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) issued Administrative Order No. 010-2005, signed by Assistant Secretary Anneli Lontok and approved by three department secretaries—Leandro Mendoza of the DOTC, Emilia Boncodin of Budget and Management, and Juanita Amatong of Finance.

With such an array of government dignitaries, the AO takes on the aura of a presidential decree.

When you cut through the bureaucratic verbiage, the core of the AO says that the initial registration of all brand-new vehicles shall be valid for three years.

Then follows more red tape: Such initial registration shall require the Certificate of Conformity (COC) issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Compulsory Third Party Liability insurance policy valid for three years.

For the car owner, the immediate benefit from this plan is obvious. After registering his new car, he does not go back to the Land Transportation Office (LTO) until three years later.

For the LTO, two-thirds of the administrative work is cut down. Also, the plan speeds up LTO's cash flow, and helps wipe out the national deficit.

But the plan raises some questions. I read the AO to mean that the registration fee will be three times the annual fee. If my reading is correct, then, for the sake of administrative efficiency, the registration fee, instead of being reduced, has been increased. By the way, the LTO uses this same ploy with your driver's license. Your three-year license costs you three times the annual fee.

When the three-year fee is computed at three times the annual rate, the fees for the second and third years take on the nature of advances. Which brings up this question: Does the car owner get a refund of his second and third year fees if his car is totally wrecked in the first year?

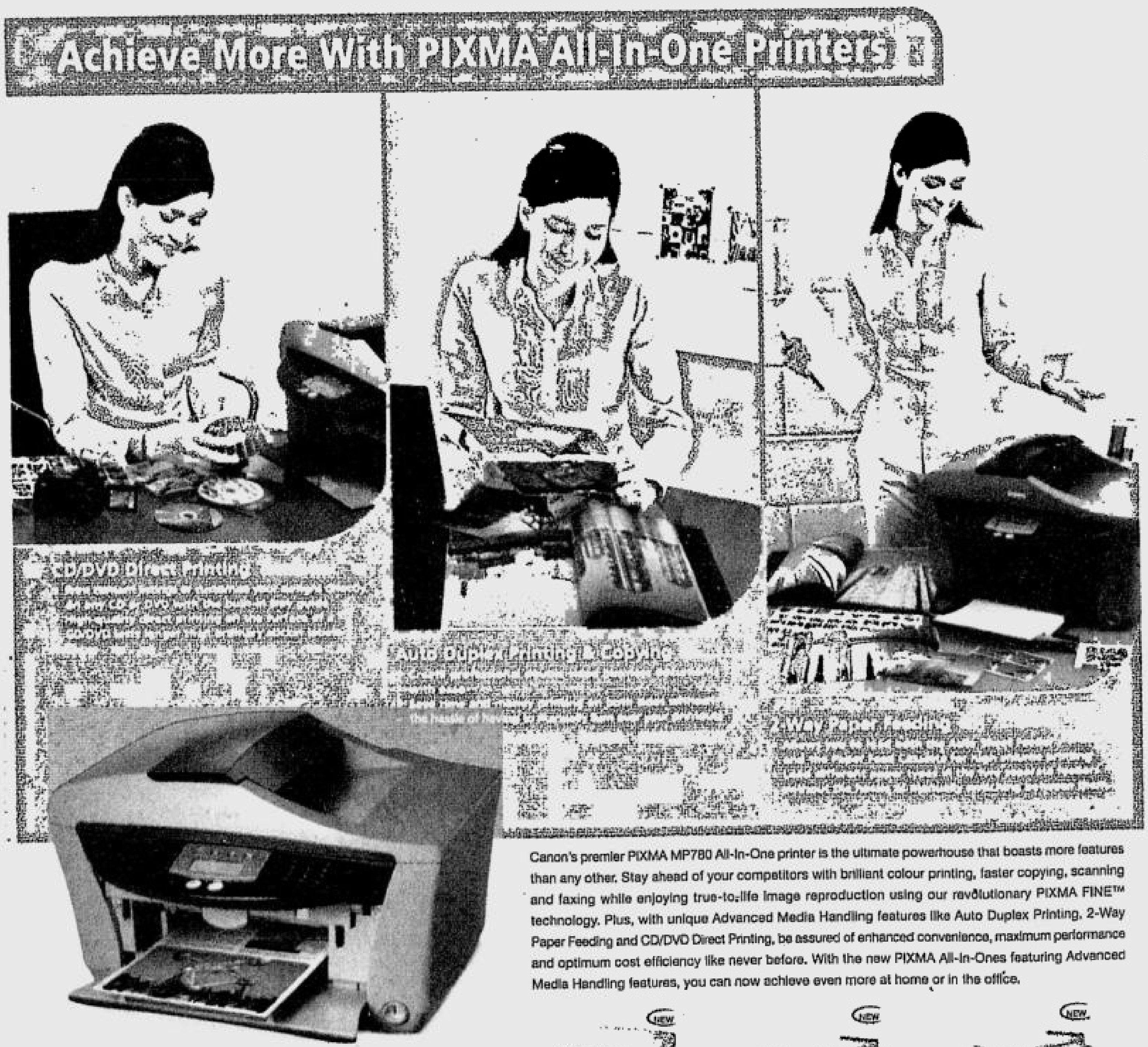
If he does not (ever heard of a government agency granting a refund?), then the three-year fee should be computed at a discount. It would be fair to compute the three-year registration fee at two and a half times the annual rate. This is usually what is done in the insurance industry for three-year policies.

Then there is the matter of the Compulsory Third Party Liability insurance. This is a regulated line of insurance. The Insurance Commission has to grant prior approval of the wordings and premiums of the policy, not to mention the agent's commission. Otherwise, since the policy is a statutory requirement for registration, the premium will soar to high heavens.

The wordings, premiums and commissions now in force are for a one-year policy. The insurance industry can easily design a three-year policy. But this new product has to go through a process at the insurance companies association and the Insurance Commission. Finally, new forms will have to be printed and distributed to all policy-issuing outlets.

But I hear the AO was issued without prior notice to the Insurance Commission and to the insurance companies. So, there is now a scramble at the insurance association to come out with a three-year policy.

Sometimes, I think the DOTC treats the Insurance Commission as if it were a minor section of the LTO. For the sake of the insuring public, it is time the commission stands up for its rights.



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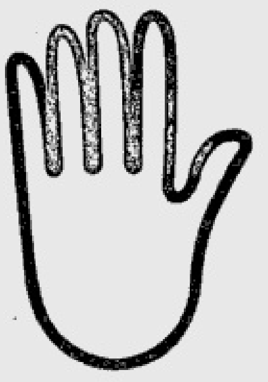

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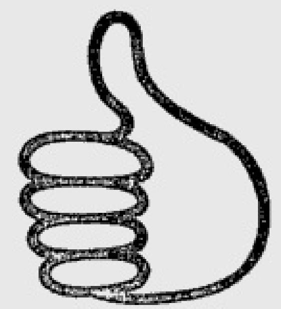

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Kawasaki unit to invest ₱520M in Mindanao plant

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Sinter Corp., a unit of Japanese firm Kawasaki Steel Corp., is investing P520 million to modernize its operations in Mindanao.

The upgrade would involve the replacement of pallets of the sintering machines, modernization of peripheral equipment and construction of the third burnt lime kiln with a capacity of 100 tons a day, according to a statement from the Board of Investments.

Once completed by January 2006, the country's lone producer of sintered iron ore would increase its capacity by 700,000 metric tons a year.

The company would also hire 173 additional workers.

Sintering is part of the process of converting iron ore into steel products.

The company's high quality, sintered ore products have been consistently placed among the country's top exports, according to the BOI.

Operating since the mid '70s, Philippine Sinter is registered with the BOI as a preferred pioneer enterprise as its plant in Mindanao is the first and so far the only one of its kind in the country.

It has also claimed to be the only sinter plant in the world detached from an integrated steel mill complex, according to the BOI.

Located within the Phividec Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental, the company's sinter plant sits on a 150-hectare land, 25 kilometers north of Cagayan de Oro City.

High-grade limestone, a material basic to sintering, is extracted from the huge deposits in Garcia-Hernandez town in Bohol and then shipped to the sinter plant in Mindanao.

Over the years, Philippine Sinter has continuously harnessed Kawasaki's technical expertise to ensure efficient transfer of technology.

The entire operation of the sinter plant today has since been left in the hands of Filipino engineers and artisans with minimum assistance from the Japanese technical staff.

The local firm usually imports iron ore from overseas source, primarily Australia.

The produce is then exported to Japan.

RP generates ₱2.5B in forex savings from diesel blend

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COUNTRY generated more than P2.5 billion in foreign exchange savings due to the mandatory use of coconut methyl ester (CME) as a diesel blend.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in a recent speech that the government registered P127 million in foreign exchange savings as the alternative fuel displaced 977,000 liters of diesel.

President Macapagal-Arroyo early last year issued Memorandum Circular No. 55, which required all government agencies to blend at least 1 percent CME with all their diesel requirements.

There are an estimated 29,619 diesel-run government vehicles, including those owned by local government units.

If all vehicles comply with the order, about 65,799 kiloliters of CME are expected to be consumed this year, according to the Department of Energy's updated Philippine Energy Plan for 2005-2014.

The government likewise encouraged the sale of CME in gasoline stations nationwide, and this generated another P2.4 billion in savings.

About 95 million liters of diesel were displaced by the 1-percent CME blend.

The use of the blend forms part of the government's efforts to become 60-percent energy self-sufficient by 2010.

The move will at the same time give the country's around 3.6 million coconut farmers additional income.

The high prices of crude and petroleum products in the regional and world markets had also pushed the government to more aggressively explore alternative fuel sources.

Apart from CME, the DOE is also pushing the use of ethanol as a gasoline blend and of compressed natural gas (CNG), initially for the public transport sector.

For CNG, the government has put in place the Natural Gas Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT), a seven-year program that aims to have all Metro Manila buses running on CNG by 2010.

The price of CNG would be pegged at P14.52 per normal cubic meter (equivalent to a liter) during the program, based on a memorandum of agreement that the DOE signed with the members of the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project consortium-Shell Philippines Exploration BV and Chevron Texaco Malampaya.

This price is almost half that of diesel at current pump price levels of between P25.70 and P27.65 a liter.

DA revives export monitoring body

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture has approved the revival of the multi-sectoral organization that will monitor the country's compliance with global food safety requirements.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap recently gave the go-ahead to establish legal and administrative mechanisms for the resumption of operations of the National Codex Organization (NCO).

The National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC) pushed for the restoration of the NCO as local food exports face the grim prospect of losing its dollar-generating agriculture and fishery exports because of tightening global food security regulations.

The NCO has been dormant for four years.

It previously monitored all relevant food safety regulations imposed by international bodies such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN-FAO).

The NCO served as an advisory body on food standardization and control issues concerning Codex rules.

Its other functions included preparing the country's official stand on all matters pertaining to new food standards set by these agencies.

It also lobbied against moves to impose non-tariff barriers to the country's exports of agricultural and fishery products.

The government inter-agency members of the ad-hoc committee are the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS), National Meat Inspection Commission (NMIC), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Philippine Coconut Authority, National Food Authority's Food Development Center (FDC), Bureau of Animal Industry, Bureau of Plant Industry and the Bureau of Food and Drugs Administration.

DA officials said earlier that reviving the NCO should boost the government's efforts to overcome non-tariff barriers being imposed by the United States and European Union, which set stringent rules preventing the entry of fresh and processed food products from the Philippines.

NEW MOON MULTI BANK AUCTION

RCBC Savings Bank* A YGC Member
CENTENNIAL Savings Bank
LBC BANK Bangko ng Bari
Keppel Bank

Mother's Day Auction

May 7, 2005, 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon,
Function Hall, Starmall EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd.
Mandaluyong City

LOW INTEREST RATE
LOW DOWN PAYMENT
AS LONG AS TEN YEARS

PRAISE CONDOMINIUM
MAKATI CITY

MIXED USE CONDO	Min. Bid Price:
F.A. 29sqm.	P 879,930
F.A. 34sqm.	P 1,046,220
F.A. 155sqm.	P 4,664,910
F.A. 255sqm.	P 7,650,090

FORTUNE VILLAGE
VALENZUELA

HOUSE & LOT		Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 244 sqm.	F.A. 120 sqm.	P 1,148,000
L.A. 247 sqm		P 2,394,000
L.A. 310 sqm.	F.A. 350 sqm.	P 4,077,000

MAIA ALTA SUBD.
ANTIPOLO

HOUSE & LOT		Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 95 sqm.	F.A. 70 sqm.	P 864,000
L.A. 180 sqm.	F.A. 80 sqm.	P 1,000,000
L.A. 132 sqm.	F.A. 80 sqm.	P 1,300,000
L.A. 104 sqm.	F.A. 80 sqm.	P 1,500,000

COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS
ANTIPOLO

HOUSE & LOT		Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 203 sqm.	F.A. 116 sqm	P 1,890,000
L.A. 266 sqm.	F.A. 136 sqm	P 2,565,000
L.A. 340 sqm.	F.A. 147 sqm	P 2,945,000
L.A. 404 sqm.	F.A. 168 sqm	P 3,420,000

LA MEDITERRANEA
DASMARINAS, CAVITE

HOUSE & LOT		Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 203 sqm.	F.A. 116 sqm	P 1,890,000
L.A. 266 sqm.	F.A. 136 sqm	P 2,565,000
L.A. 340 sqm.	F.A. 147 sqm	P 2,945,000
L.A. 404 sqm.	F.A. 168 sqm	P 3,420,000

LA RESIDENCIA
STA. ROSA, LAGUNA

MIXED USE CONDO	Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 150 sqm	P 900,000
L.A. 174 sqm	P 1,100,000
L.A. 232 sqm	P 1,300,000
L.A. 335 sqm	P 2,300,000

PROMENADE SUBDIVISION
STA. ROSA, LAGUNA

RESIDENTIAL LOT	Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 575 sqm	P 3,500,000
L.A. 739 sqm	P 4,805,000
L.A. 832 sqm	P 5,410,000
L.A. 875 sqm	P 5,570,000

BELLE REVE SUBDIVISION
STA. ROSA, LAGUNA

RESIDENTIAL LOT	Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 530 sqm	P 3,000,000
L.A. 530 sqm.	P 3,445,000
L.A. 690 sqm	P 4,100,000
L.A. 744 sqm	P 4,500,000

B.F. RESORT EXECUTIVE
LAS PINAS

HOUSE & LOT		Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 100 sqm.	F.A. 60 sqm	P 1,020,000
L.A. 150 sqm.	F.A. 68 sqm.	P 1,500,000
L.A. 349 sqm.	F.A. 70 sqm.	P 2,150,000
L.A. 240 sqm.	F.A. 395 sqm.	P 5,370,000

ST. JOSEPH SUBDIVISION
TAGAYTAY CITY

RESIDENTIAL LOT	Min. Bid Price:
L.A. 199sqm	P 995,000
L.A. 349sqm	P 1,745,000
L.A 1,599sqm	P 4,998,000

CALOOCAN

RCBC1_SB011 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 153 sqm. F.A. 70 18 sqm.
20 Athens Vista Verde North
Min. Bid Price : P 1,020,000

RCBC1_SB009 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 226 sqm F.A. 200 sqm.
B4 L25 Pleasant View Subd.
Min. Bid Price : P 2,450,000

RCBC1_SB206 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A.99sqm F.A 100sqm
B1 L1 Palmera Spring
Min. Bid Price : P 1,200,000

RCBC1_SB010 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 216 sqm. F.A. 175 sqm.
B1 L17 Hillcrest Subd.
Min. Bid Price : P 2,250,000

MALABON

CSB 04 - WARE HOUSE BLDG
L.A 1,000sqm F.A 393sqm
BRGY. PANGHULO
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

MAKATI CITY

CSB 02 - APRT BLDG
L.A 240sqm F.A 100sqm
Along Escuela St., GUADALUPE
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,600,000 00

CSB 27_RSDL CONDO
F.A 126 5 sqm.
Unit 73, Mayfair Mansion, LEGAZPI VILL.
Min. Bid Price : P 3,608,500

LBC 071 - COMM'L CONDO
F.A. 90sqm.
CITYLAND 10, 23/F H.V. Dela Costa
Min. Bid Price : P 3,900,000

RCBC1_SB216 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 273 sqm FA 193 sqm.
Pembo, Fort Bonifacio
Min. Bid Price : P 2,500,000

MANILA

RCBC1_SB219 - CONDOMINIUM
FA 70 sqm
Empire Plaza Condo, Unit 1207
Min. Bid Price : P 4,850,000.00

RCBC1_SB220 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 113 sqm FA 73 sqm.
08 Callejon st., Kristineville Exec. Homes
Min. Bid Price : P 1,830,000.00

MARIKINA

RCBC2_SB012 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 420 sqm. F.A. 310 sqm.
Twinville Subd.
Min. Bid Price : P 3,500,000

MUNTINLUPA

RCBC2_SB014 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 164 sqm F.A. 135 sqm.
L2 B12 Lakeshore Drive, Tunasan
Min Bid Price : P 1,800,000

PASAY

RCBC1_SB221 - HOUSE & LOT
FA 33 sqm. LA 193 sqm
Blk. 17 Lot 08, Tupaz St. Bo. San Jose
Min. Bid Price : P CALL US

RCBC1_SB222 - OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 47 sqm
Unit 1108, 11th Flr. Buendia Tower,
Min Bid Price : P 1,550,000.00

RCBC1_SB223 -OFFICE CONDO
FA 130 sqm
Room 603, 6th Flr Buendia Towers
Min. Bid Price : P 1,900,000.00

PARAÑAQUE

RCBC2_SB016 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 331 sqm
L3 B10 Everlasting cor., Violet St.,
Marcelo Green Village
Min. Bid Price : P 1,670,000

RCBC1_SB212 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 72 sqm FA 72 sqm
Unit 13 &14 Chateau Anton,
Betterliving Subd.
Min. Bid Price : P 2,080,000

RCBC1_SB213 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 120 sqm FA 245 sqm
Shenandoah Hts. 15-A Shenandoah st., Shenandoah Homes
Min. Bid Price : P 2,900,000

RCBC1_SB214 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 351 sqm FA 313 sqm
Blk. 26 lot 01, Don Bosco St.,
Betterliving
Min Bid Price : P 4,050,000

RCBC1_SB215 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 207 sqm FA 113 sqm.
Maharlika 4, Betterliving
Min. Bid Price : P 2,430,000

ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG CITY

RCBC1_SB226 - CONDOMINIUM
F.A. 106 687 sqm.
Unit 2105 Galleria Suites, Ortigas Area
Min. Bid Price : P 6,035,000

RCBC1_SB020 - CONDO UNIT
F.A. 73 97 sqm./unit
Unit F-301 / F-302 Hampton Gardens,
Maybunga
Min. Bid Price : P 2,500,000/each unit

RCBC1_SB021 - CONDO UNIT
F.A. 30 sqm
Unit L101-A-L101 OMM San Miguel Ave.
Min Bid Price . P 2,646,000

QUEZON CITY

CYC 01 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 106 6 sqm FA 167 05 sqm
NEAR 20th ave., CUBAO
Minimum Bid Price P 3,500,000.00

CYC 02 - HOUSE AND LOT
L.A. 805sqm. F.A. 375 sqm.
Ficker St., Greenmeadows Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: P29,000,000

LBC 084 - RSDL LOT
L.A 300 sqm
Ipil St. Sao Savile NEOPOLITAN VI
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,500,000

LBC 085 - RSDL LOT
L.A 999sqm
Roses St. Brgy. FAIRVIEW
Minimum Bid Price. P 4,900,000

RCBC1_SB022 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 37 4 sqm F.A. 58 65 sqm.
Unit 207-G South Triangle
Min. Bid Price : P 2,150,000

RCBC1_SB229 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 58 83 sqm. F.A. 119 sqm.
159 L42 Unit2 West Fairview
Min. Bid Price : P 1,904,000.00

RCBC1_SB026 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 325 sqm.
L14 B26 J Fuentes Dr.1426 North
Susana Exec Vill.
Min. Bid Price : P 2,926,000

RCBC1_SB230 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 126 sqm F.A. 192 sqm
Unit 5 #112 Pluto Carmel Subd. Proj. 6
Min. Bid Price : P 3,094,800

RCBC1_SB235 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 72 sqm. F.A. 80 sqm.
B1 L92 Grandwood Villas Old Balara
Min Bid Price . P 2,660,000

RCBC1_SB036- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 54sqm. F.A. 66sqm
B1 L116 Grandwood Villas Old Balara
Min. Bid Price : P 2,375,000

RCBC1_SB033 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 212 sqm.
B15 L2 Marylown Circle, Novaliches
Min Bid Price : P 2,185,000

RCBC1_SB027 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 73 sqm.
L8-D Jem 3 Subd. Banlat
Min. Bid Price : P 1,150,000

RCBC1_SB232 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 526 sqm.
B11 L30 Fairview Park Subd
Min. Bid Price : P 8,520,000.00

RCBC1_SB029 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 60 sqm F.A. 100 sqm.
Unit 8 Adelia 5 Park Townhomes
Min Bid Price : P 1,620,000

RCBC1_SB030 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 378 sqm F.A. 642 sqm
23 Pinesville, Greenview Exec. Subd.
Min. Bid Price . P 8,352,000

RCBC1_SB034- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 79 3 sqm F.A. 108 sqm.
11 Camia DRJ Subd. Sauyo
Novaliches
Min Bid Price : P 969,000

RCBC1_SB238 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 120 sqm
B26 L6 Goodwill Subd. San Bartolome
Min. Bid Price : P 2,260,000.00

RCBC1_SB042 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 81 8 sqm F.A. 76 sqm.
Unit 9 Apa Comp TS
Min Bid Price : P 1,170,000

LITTLE BAGUIO, SAN JUAN

CSB 09 - 5 STORY BLDG
L.A 574sqm F.A 3,554 (55% FINISHED)
Hardboard cor. B. Padilla St.
LITTLE BAGUIO
Minimum Bid Price: P 28,500,000

KBP 193 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 250 sqm F.A. 154 10 sqm
#140, G. Reyes, Balong Bato,
S.J. Manila
Min Bid Price: P 3,200,000.00

TAGUIG

CSB 24 - RSDL LOT
L.A 417sqm
L6 B5 Ph 1, AFPOVAI
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,700,000

VALENZUELA

RCBC1_SB243 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 166 sqm F.A. 298 5 sqm
#3 Little Baguio Maruias
Min. Bid Price : P 2,475,000

RCBC1_SB244 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 215 8 sqm F.A. 258 7 sqm.
5043 Sto. Rosario Medesto St.,
Mapulang Lupa
Min Bid Price : P 3,114,000

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL

LBC 059 - RSDL LOT
L.A 502sqm
Brgy. Mambugan, ANTIPOLO
Minimum Bid Price P 1,200,000

RCBC2_SB050 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,415 sqm
L1 B14 Victoria Valley Subd.,
Mayamot
Min. Bid Price: P 3,800,000

RCBC2_SB258 - RSDL CMPD.
L.A. 1,305 sqm F.A. 744 sqm.
#27 Sunrise cor 4th Ave.,
Beverly Hills Subd.
Min Bid Price. P 11,700,000

RCBC2_SB058 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,030 sqm
Masagn Hills
Min. Bid Price : P 4,000,000

RCBC1_SB065 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 176 sqm F.A. 60 sqm.
B7 L7, 9 & 11 Loremar Exec.
Min Bid Price . P 3,133,000

RCBC1_SB372- RSDL LOT
L.A. 276 sqm.
B4 L19 Bentley Park Subdivision
Min. Bid Price : P 870,000

RCBC1_SB375- RSDL LOT
L.A. 265 sqm.
B4 L8 Bentley Park Subdivision
Min. Bid Price : P 863,000

CAINTA, TAYTAY, ANGONO, RIZAL

CSB 26_IND'L LOT W/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1 337 sqm + L.A. 2,481 sqm F.A. 1,462 sqm
#6 VALLEY GOLF, VALLEY GOLF
Min. Bid Price. P 28,7000,000

KBP 241 - DUPLEX
F.A. 408 44 sqm.
L12 & 13 B23 Ridgemont Ave
Twin Peak Drive Ridgemont Exec.
Subd., Taytay, Rizal
Min. Bid Price. P 4,200,000.00

RCBC2_SB184 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 1,318 sqm
Bgy. San Juan, Cainta
Min. Bid Price : P 11,860,000

RCBC2_SB296 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 116 sqm F.A. 202 sqm
Doña Nieves, Sto. Niño Angono
Min. Bid Price . P 1,800,000

RCBC2_SB199 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150 sqm F.A. 148 sqm.
Ridgemont Exec. Vill., San Isidro,
Taytay
Min. Bid Price : P 1,800,000

RCBC2_SB200 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 100 sqm F.A. 234 sqm
18 Sampaguita St., Aranzanzu Subd.,
San Mateo
Min. Bid Price : P 900,000

RCBC2_SB202 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 240 sqm F.A. 232 sqm
L29 B5 Marvi Hills Subd. San Mateo
Min. Bid Price . P 1,700,000

RCBC1_SB205 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 50 sqm. F.A. 60 sqm.
Binangonan
Min Bid Price : P 2,050,000

BATANGAS

CSB 16 - RAW LAND
L.A 68,530sqm
(13 LOTS w/ Taal View)
Brgy. Quiling, TALISAY
Minimum Bid Price: P 10,280,850

CYC 03 - RSDL BEACH LOT
L.A. 1,959 sqm
Tali Beach, Nasugbu
Minimum Bid Price P 3,918,000

KBP 233- 3 STOREY SCHOOL BLDG.
L.A. 1,113 sqm.
#53.N. Gonzales St., Brgy.2 Poblacion,
Lanauan, Batangas
Min. Bid Price. P 18,000,000.00

BULACAN

LBC 054 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 180sqm, F.A 203sqm
Bo. Pandayan, Imayo MEYCAUAYAN
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000

LBC 003 - RSDL LOT
L.A 114,227sqm
Bo. Of San Mateo NORZAGARAY
Minimum Bid Price: P 10,900,000

LBC 004 - RSDL LOT w/ IMPRVT
L.A 495sqm
Bo. San Juan, SAN MIGUEL
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,000,000

LBC 005 - 3 RSDL LOT
L.A 30,464 sqm
Calawitan, SAN ILDEFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000

LBC 006 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 994sqm
Brgy. San Juan, SAN ILDEFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000

LBC 007- HOUSE & LOT
L.A 2,174sqm F.A. 33sqm
Tabing Ilog, Marilao
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000

LBC 008 - RSDL LOT
L.A 15,424sqm
Bo. Sulucan, Mun of ANGAT
Minimum Bid Price. P 5,000,000

LBC 010 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 300sqm, F.A 308sqm
Bo. Sabang, BALIUAG
Minimum Bid Price: P 6,300,000

LBC 015 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 400sqm F.A. 27sqm
L.A. 140sqm F.A. 104sqm
Siling Bata, Pandi
Min. Bid Price . P 1,600,000

LBC 017 - 2 RSDL LOT w/ IMPRVMT
L.A 605sqm
BALIUAG, Bulacan
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,100,000

LBC 020 - 4 RSDL LOT
L.A 480sqm
VILLA CECILIA Subd.
Brgy. Sto. Cristo
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,650,000

LBC 021 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 1,371sqm, F.A 142sqm
Poblacion, Bo. BUSTOS
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,300,000

LBC 022 - 4 RSDL LOT w/ IMPRVMT
L.A 702sqm
P. Damaso BRGY CONCEPCION
Brgy. Virgen Delas Flores
Minimum Bid Price. P 2,900,000

LBC 023 - RSDL LOT
L.A 6,575sqm
Bo. Taboc, ANGAT
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,900,000

LBC 024 - 2 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 1,294sqm, F.A 68 842sqm
Brgy. Sulran, SAN MIGUEL
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,300,000

LBC 025 - RSDL LOT
L.A 884sqm
Bo. Sto. Niño, Tangos BALIUAG
Minimum Bid Price. P 2,000,000

LBC 026 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 367sqm, F.A 412sqm
Bo. LOLOMBOY, BOCAUE
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,800,000

LBC 029 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 421sqm, F.A 300sqm
Mun. of BUSTOS
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,800,000

LBC 032 - COMM'L w/ IMPRVMT
L.A 193sqm, F.A 137sqm
Dr. Gonzales St. Sabang BALIUAG
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,200,000

LBC 033 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 3,252sqm, F.A 50sqm
Mun. of SAN ILDEFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: P 6,800,000

LBC 034 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 291sqm
Bo. Camalig Pantok MEYCAUAYAN
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,170,000

LBC 035 - 2 RSDL LOT
L.A 240sqm, L.A 321sqm
San Matias Sto. Tomas Pampanga
GOLD RIDGE Estate, Brgy. Sta Cruz
Minimum Bid Price. P 3,100,000

RCBC1_SB141 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 259 sqm F.A. 160 sqm
B37 L6 Buhangin Garden Vill.,
Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 3,000,000

RCBC2_SB059 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 485 sqm
Eucalyptus St., Greenplains.,
Calumpit
Min. Bid Price: P 1,440,000

RCBC2_SB070 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 2,471 sqm.
Burol 1st., Balagtas.
Min. Bid Price. P 20,000,000

RCBC2_SB071 - IND'L WAREHOUSE
L.A. 845 sqm F.A. 809 sqm.
RIS Industrial Complex, Mercado St.,
Guiguinto
Min. Bid Price: P 5,580,000

RCBC2_SB074 - RSDL LOT
L.A.5,497 sqm
Barrio Mabalo, Malolos
Min. Bid Price. P 5,500,000

RCBC2_SB077 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 784 sqm. F.A. 132 sqm.
Lot 878 Agnaya, Plaridel
Min. Bid Price. P 2,056,000

RCBC1_SB080 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,958 sqm.
Lot 3004 C Camangyanan, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 2,178,000

RCBC1_SB078 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 45 sqm. F.A. 23 sqm.
569 Parulan, Plaridel
Min. Bid Price. P 950,000

RCBC1_SB086 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 79 sqm F.A. 48 sqm.
L1087 Bocaue
Min. Bid Price: P 1,007,000

RCBC1_SB084 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 2625sqm. F.A. 100 sqm.
Cutcot Pulilan
Min. Bid Price: P 6,560,000

RCBC1_SB085 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 350 sqm F.A. 120 sqm.
B2 L5 & L7 Violeta Metrovilla, Bocaue
Min. Bid Price: P 2,583,000

RCBC1_SB088 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,402 sqm F.A. 60 sqm.
Sapang Palay, SJDM
Min Bid Price: P 11,210,000

RCBC1_SB095 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,421 sqm
Camia cor. Everlasting Carissa
Homes SJDM
Min Bid Price. P 1,400,000

RCBC1_SB099 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,528 sqm F.A. 305 sqm.
220 Manatal Pandi
Min Bid Price. P 5,364,000

RCBC1_SB276 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 207 sqm F.A. 50 sqm
89 Sumapang Bata, Malolos
Min. Bid Price. P 1,880,000

RCBC1_SB081 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,708 sqm F.A. 100 sqm
218 Liwasan San Vicente, Sta. Maria
Min Bid Price P 2,250,000

RCBC1_SB087 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 205 sqm F.A. 78 sqm
147 Bunio St., Bocaue
Min. Bid Price. P 2,090,000

RCBC1_SB278 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 259 sqm F.A. 160 sqm
B37 L6 Buhangin Garden Vill. Sta. Maria
Min Bid Price: P 2,700,000

RCBC1_SB079 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 540 sqm F.A. 200 sqm
5069 Mary Grace Subd. Sto. Niño,
Plaridel
Min Bid Price: P 2,130,000

BAGUIO CITY

CSB 21 - COMM'L BLDG
L.A 1,705sqm F.A 2 907sqm
Kilometer 5 TRINIDAD ROAD
Minimum Bid Price: P 40,000,000 + 7
Million Tax

KBP 120 - TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 152.311 sqm F.A. 108 sqm.
Unit AT - C18 Anvile Court
Townhouse, Justice Vil
Min. Bid Price: P 1,500,000.00

CABANATUAN

RCBC1_SB106 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 5,686 sqm. F.A. 1,310 sqm.
Lot 1300 D Sotoysoy, Cabanatuan
Min. Bid Price : P 14,500,000

COTABATO

KBP 235 - 3 STOREY RSD'L BLDG.
L.A. 811 sqm. F.A. 369 98 sqm.
#29 Quezon Ave., Cotabato City
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

SOUTH COTABATO

KBP 248 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 192 sqm.
Adolfo St., Polomolok, South Cotabato
Min. Bid Price: P 40,000.00

NUEVA ECIJA

LBC 038 - 7 RSDL LOT w/ IMPRVMT
L.A 7,397sqm
Brgy. Mapalad, STA. ROSA
Minimum Bid Price. P 2,100,000

CAVITE

CSB 11- RAW LAND
L.A 63,332sqm
West of MANILA SOUTHWOODS Ph II
Bo. Baybay, Carmona
Minimum Bid Price: P 27,000,000

CSB 12- RAW LAND
L.A 78,277sqm
Brgy. Road, Brgy. DE OCAMPO
Minimum Bid Price. P 56,000,000

CSB 13 - 2 RSDL LOT
L.A 7,844sqm
Poblacion, SILANG
Minimum Bid Price. P 14,000,000

CSB 14 - RSDL COMM'L LOT
L.A 2,010sqm
Along Tagaytay-Silang-Sta. Rosa
Road, Putting Kahoy, SILANG
Minimum Bid Price. P 4,000,000

CSB 15- HOUSE & LOT
L.A 279 5sqm F.A 108sqm
Along Rd. Novaleta, Brgy. Binakayan,
KAWIT
Minimum Bid Price. P 2,258,000

RCBC2_SB118 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 64 sqm F.A. 52 sqm
B30 L9 St., Rafael Ave., San Rafael
Exec. Villas, Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000

RCBC2_SB308 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 231 sqm F.A. 130 sqm.
Blk. 04 lot 23, Via Verde Village,
Poinsettia, Dasma
Min. Bid Price: P 1,460,000

RCBC1_SB309 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 63 sqm F.A. 93 sqm.
Georgeville, Blk. 05 Lot 45, Pag asa II
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000

RCBC1_SB125 -HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 109 sqm F.A. 93 sqm.
Sorrento Executive Homes,
Panapaan, Bacoor
Min. Bid Price : P 1,040,000

RCBC1_SB124 -HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 120 sqm F.A. 63 sqm.
Woodwind Village, Molino IV, Bacoor
Min. Bid Price . P 1,050,000

CEBU CITY

KBP 232- VACANT LOT
L.A. 1,835 sqm.
Bo. Agus, Lapu-lapu City
Min. Bid Price: P 2,200,000.00

LBC 041 - RAW LAND
L.A 14,450sqm
Brgy. PIT - OS
Minimum Bid Price: P 7,800,000

GENERAL SANTOS

KBP 226 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 8,824 sqm.
Barrio Bula, Gen. San. City
Min. Bid Price P 2,400,000 00

KBP 247- 1 STOREY RSD'L BLDG
L.A 500 sqm F.A 150 sqm.
Peres Subd., Puro Malakas,
Gen. San City
Min. Bid Price. P 900,000.00

LBC 047 - RSDL LOT
L.A 12,632sqm
Monesas St., San Isidro
Minimum Bid Price. P 7,000,000

ILOCOS NORTE

LBC 050 - RSDL BLDG
L.A 92sqm
Brgy. 3 Canggrunaan, BATAC
Minimum Bid Price. P 1,100,000

ILOILO

KBP 151 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 914 sqm.
Cor. Muelle Loney St., Iloilo City
Min. Bid Price P 12,000,000.00

KBP 205 - 4 ADJOINING LOTS
L.A. 229,572 sqm. F.A. 338 sqm.
Brgy. Guwahon, Sitio, Padios, Sara,
Iloilo City
Min Bid Price: P 2,500,000.00

RCBC2_SB137 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,060 sqm
Divinagracia St., La Paz
Min. Bid Price: P 7,250,000

LAGUNA

LBC 052 - LARGE RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,474sqm.
COUNTRY Club, Brgy. Sto Domingo
Minimum Bid Price. P 12,529,000

LBC 053 - LARGE RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,898sqm.
COUNTRY Club, Brgy. Sto Domingo
Minimum Bid Price. P 16,133,000

CSB 25 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 576sqm F.A 175sqm
Tatlong Hari St. F & F SUBD. Sta. Rosa
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000

KBP 236 - THEATRE
L.A. 2,085 sqm.
#285 J. Gonzales St., Poblacion,
Biñan, Laguna
Min. Bid Price: P 38,000,000.00

RCBC2_SB330 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm F.A. 110 sqm
Pacita Complex, no. 1 C.P. Garcia
Min Bid Price P 2,215,000

RCBC2_SB331 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A 252sqm F.A. 100sqm
Lakeshore Homes, Subd.,
#240 Rosal St.,
Sto. Domingo, Bay
Min. Bid Price. P 1,470,000

RCBC1_SB158 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 181 sqm. FA 167 sqm
B8 L 4,5,6,&7 Don Miguel, Subd., Pila
Min. Bid Price. P 2,800,000

RCBC1_SB333 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 190/288 sqm FA 430sqm
B3 L 31 & 32 Jamaica Hills Subd.,
Bambang
Min. Bid Price: P 5,350,000

RCBC2_SB334 - VACANT LOT
L.A. 150/220/174 sqm
Blk. 21 lot's 33-35, Villa Esmeralda
San LorenzoVillage, Sta. Rosa
Min. Bid Price. P 2,530,000

RCBC1_SB344 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 271 sqm FA 150 sqm.
Bo. Sinalhan, Bo. Rd., Sta. Rosa
Min. Bid Price: P 836,000

LAS PIÑAS

RCBC1_SB165 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 208 sqm. F.A. 271 sqm.
B15 L21, M. Jhocson St.
B.F. Executive Homes
Min. Bid Price . P 3,650,000

RCBC1_SB168 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 120 sqm. F.A. 105 sqm
B7-A L13, Revelation St.
CH - Classic., Almanza
Min. Bid Price : P 1,370,000

RCBC1_SB170 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 315 sqm. F.A. 194 sqm.
2 Uranium St., Camella Homes
Classic IV
Min. Bid Price : P 2,300,000

RCBC1_SB173 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 148 sqm. F.A. 180 sqm.
No. 54 Minuet St., Sta. Cecilia Village,
Talon Dos
Min. Bid Price : P 1,800,000

RCBC1_SB174 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 238 sqm F.A. 112 sqm.
No. 51, Deo Street, Pilar Village,
Min. Bid Price : P 2,000,000

LEYTE

LBC 040 - RSDL LOT
L.A 7,634 50sqm
Bo. Marasbaras, Bo. Sawang
TACLOBAN
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,000,000

PAMPANGA

CSB 19 - WARE HOUSE
L.A 4,000sqm F.A 510sqm
Dudurol Rd. Brgy. Sulipan, APALIT
Minimum Bid Price P 2,810,000

NAGA CITY

LBC 056 - 2 RSDL LOT W/ IMPRVMT
L.A 233sqm
L.A 290sqm
M. Castro St. CITY HEIGHTS Subd.
Minimum Bid Price. P 3,834,000

PANGASINAN

LBC 043 - 4 STOREY BLDG
L.A 91sqm
Bo. Pogo, Chico Dagupan
Minimum Bid Price. P 4,500,000

LBC 045- RSDL BLDG w/ WARE HOUSE
L.A 874sqm, F.A 771sqm
Brgy. Bacayao, Dagupan
Minimum Bid Price. P 3,200,000

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LBC 062 - AGRI-LOT w/ FISHPOND
L.A 90,161 sqm
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Minimum Bid Price P2,700,000

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NDC sets investment in ethanol project

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Development Co., the investment arm of the Department of Trade and Industry, has committed to put in money to support the government's National Fuel Ethanol Program.

The NDC board recently approved the investment agreement between the NDC and Bronzeoak Philippines Inc., the main proponent of ethanol development in the country, according to NDC general manager Arthur Aguilar.

Under the agreement, the NDC would put up 40 percent of the initial capital structure of San Carlos Bio-Energy Inc., which will be formed to develop and operate a mill and distillery complex primarily for ethanol production.

Bronzeoak would put up the remaining 60 percent.

The integrated facility would be put up in the Agro-Industrial Export Processing Zone in San Carlos, Negros Occidental.

The integrated venture would have a cane milling plant with a through-put capacity of 1,500 metric tons a day of cane and a co-generation power plant with a capacity of about 9 megawatts, of which, 4 megawatts would be sold to the grid.

The facility's ethanol distillery plant will also produce 100,00 liters of bio-ethanol a day; and the CO2 plant will have a production capacity of 17,000 metric tons of alcohol-free carbon dioxide each year for soft drinks manufacturing.

The Arroyo administration is promoting the production and commercial use of ethyl alcohol or ethanol as an alternative fuel in light of continuing increases in world oil prices.

Ethanol is an additive made from sugarcane.

Reports said that if fully promoted, the use of ethanol could reduce the country's dependence on imported fuel by as much as 60 percent.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said that the government's ethanol program was an energy independence strategy identified in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

"It also requires government and private financial institutions to provide credit to cooperatives and individual farmers who participate in the production of sugarcane for ethanol," Santos said.

Aguilar said the deal with Bronzeoak also provided that the NDC would put up 30 percent of the equity component of the project's operation phase, while the 70 percent would be financed with debt.

The Sugar Planters Group and other investors have signified their interest to also be part of the San Carlos Bio-Energy Inc.

The joint venture between the NDC and Bronzeoak would supply fuel ethanol to the transport sector, electricity to the distribution grid and carbon dioxide to the beverage industry.

It would also generate Carbon Emission Reduction Certificates for the Senate-ratified Kyoto Protocol Treaty.

BSP raises GIR target by $1B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has raised its gross international reserves target this year to $17 billion from $16 billion, taking advantage of much-improved foreign inflows to beef up its war chest against rising oil prices.

In a press briefing Friday, BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the higher build-up of GIR was seen amid better-than-expected foreign exchange inflows, likewise resulting in a possible imrprovement of the BSP's balance of payment (BOP) outlook for the year.

The BSP earlier expected its GIR to range at only $14-$15 billion this year - the same level targeted in 2004 - given the cautious outlook on the global business environment.

The GIR—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from multilateral institutions and foreign investments—is an indicator of ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy like importation and debt servicing.

As the global economy appeared headed for a slowdown this year, the BSP was more conservative in its earlier GIR forecast given the possibility that the country could not rely on export earnings alone to generate foreign exchange inflows.

At end-2004, actual GIR level hit $16.05 billion, up 1.1 percent from end-November but 4.8 percent lower than last year.

The GIR build-up in 2004 and early this year was partly supported by proceeds from fresh public sector loans.

A major contributor this year, however, was the robust inflows from foreign portfolio investments.

Net inflows of "hot money" or foreign portfolio investments surged to $1.52 billion in the first quarter, about 17 times better than the measly $91.5 million windfall a year ago, due to much-improved investor appetite for local stocks.

The three-month portfolio inflows were already more than three-folds better than the $486.8 million level posted for the whole of 2004.

Tetangco said the inflows were continuing.

In the first week of April alone, he said some $218.9 million more in net inflows came through the banking system.

For the whole of the year, Tetangco said net portfolio inflows would likely hit $2.5-$3 billion, likewise perking up the value of the peso against the US dollar.

"There's potential for further improvement, especially with the strong regional currencies, especially the Japanese yen," Tetangco said.

Meanwhile, Tetangco said the BSP would likely revise upwards its BOP target, as the more favorable performance of portfolio investments, as well as the increasing remittances from Overseas Filipino Workers, had improved the BOP outlook.

Fil-Chinese firms look outside Metro Manila

FILIPINO-CHINESE businessmen are now looking at investment opportunities outside Metro Manila as concerns over kidnappings and the peace and order situation have eased.

Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said the federation was embarking on an investment marketing program that would involve identifying business opportunities all over the country.

The federation plans to come up with a more focused investment priority list for each province.

The list, he said, would complement a similar endeavor of the trade department.

"The plan is to identify and make a list of all investment possibilities within six months. We are mobilizing 170 of our local chambers to find good investment opportunities in their respective areas," said Chua in an interview with reporters.

The local chambers of the federation would also identify tourism spots for promotion and development.

"Once the listing is produced, we plan to make a brochure that would make it easier for our members to make investment plans. We would also share our findings with other investors who may have the money," said Chua.

He said the federation's plan would help create employment in the countryside.

"This is our contribution to the administration's 10-point program specifically on job-creation, investment generation and dispersion of economic development in the countryside," added Chua.

Chua said businessmen were encouraged to expand business operations as the incidence of kidnappings has declined.

Only one kidnapping case was reported this year, that of three-year Kenshi Yu in February.

The case tagged former Quezon Rep. and actor Dennis Roldan as mastermind.

Once a serious security problem, kidnapping cases have slowed down last year to about once a week on the average from about daily two years ago, according to Chua. Clarissa S. Batino

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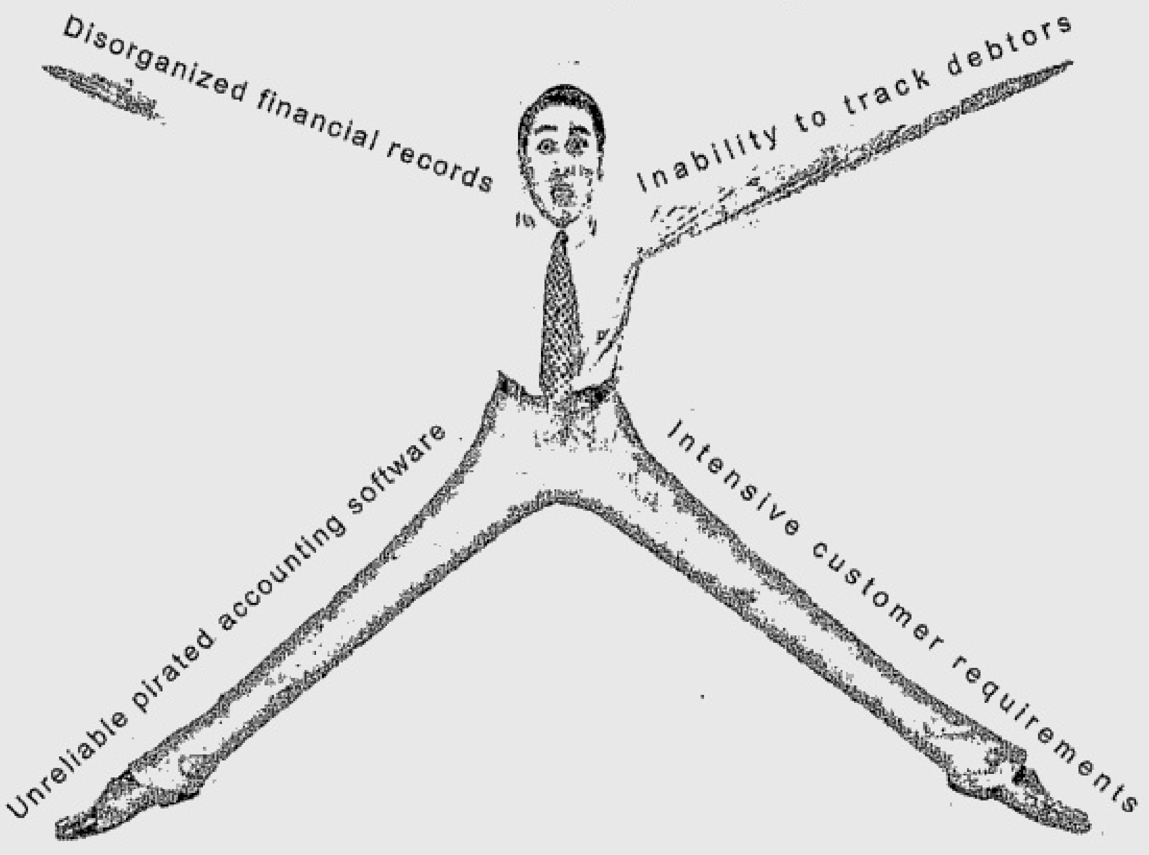
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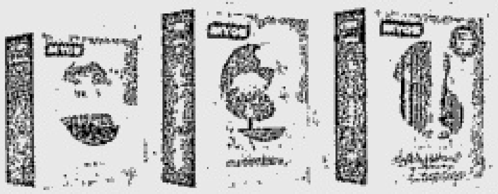

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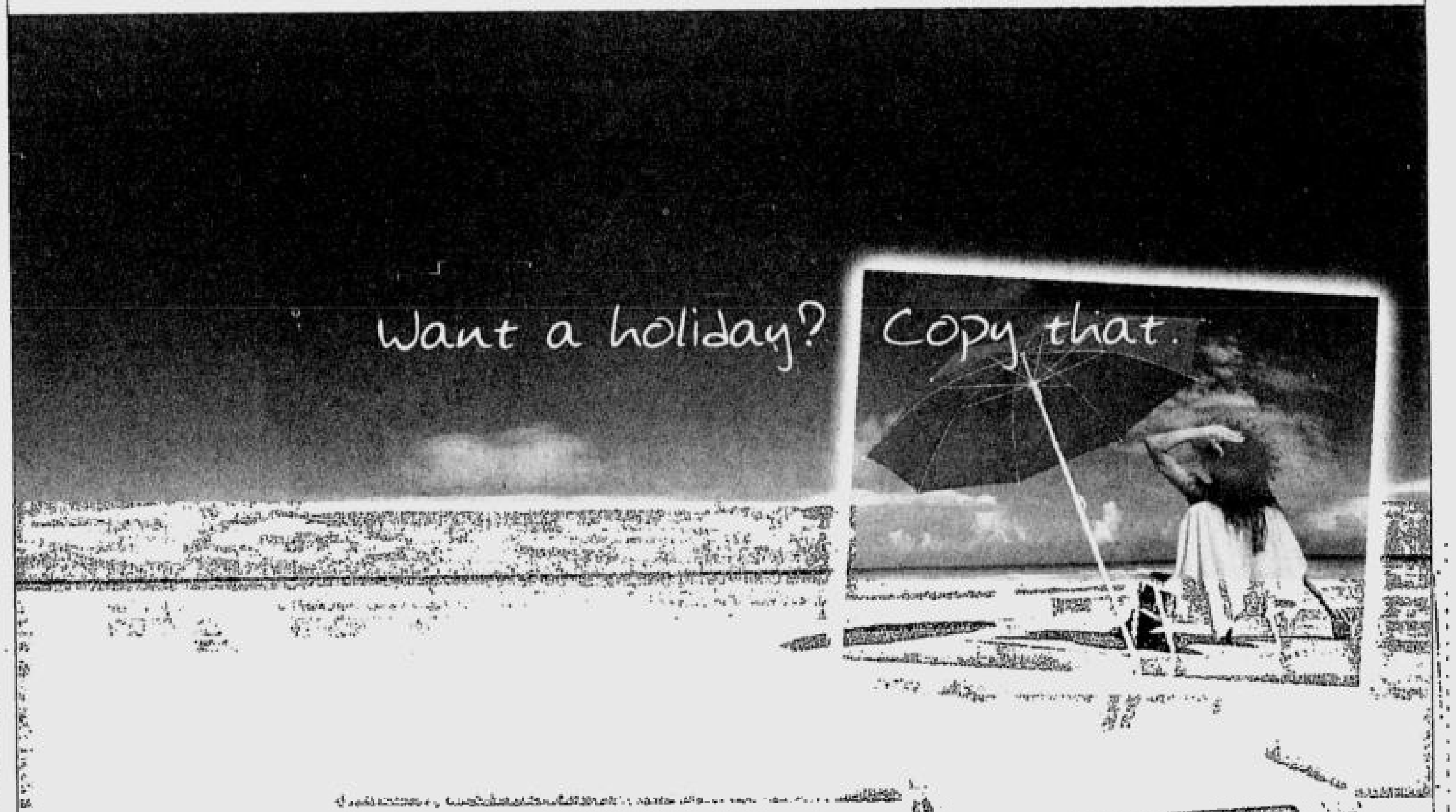
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3. The warranty card stub will serve as the official raffle stub. Simply fill-out completely the whole warranty card. Tear the other half of the warranty card, which will serve as the raffle entry, and drop this in the drop box located in the dealer office where the unit is purchased. The remaining half of the warranty card will serve as proof for redemption purposes.
4. Deadline for submission of entries is on April 30, 2005, 5:00 PM. Raffle draw will be on May 15, 2005 at 2:00 PM at the Canon Marketing Philippines Main Office at Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Ave. cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City, under the presence of a DTI representative.
5. All purchases made from March 1 to April 30, 2005 are eligible to join the raffle promotion.
6. Employees of Canon Marketing (Phils.), Inc., Dentsu Philippines, Inc. and participating outlets including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
7. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash. Winners can only win once.
8. Winners will shoulder the required 20% tax for prizes that will exceed P10,000.
9. The list of winners will be published in major publications (PDI, Phil. Star, MB) on May 18, 2005 after the draw. Winners will be notified via registered mail. For the raffle promo, the redemption period shall be within 60 days from receipt of notification letter. For the premium item, redemption period shall be within 60 days from end of promo period.
10. To claim prize, winners must present the warranty stub, a valid I.D. and the registered notice. In the event that the winner cannot present the warranty stub, the winner can still claim his prize upon presentation of valid I.D. and registered notice. For provincial winners, they can claim their prize at the nearest outlet/branch.

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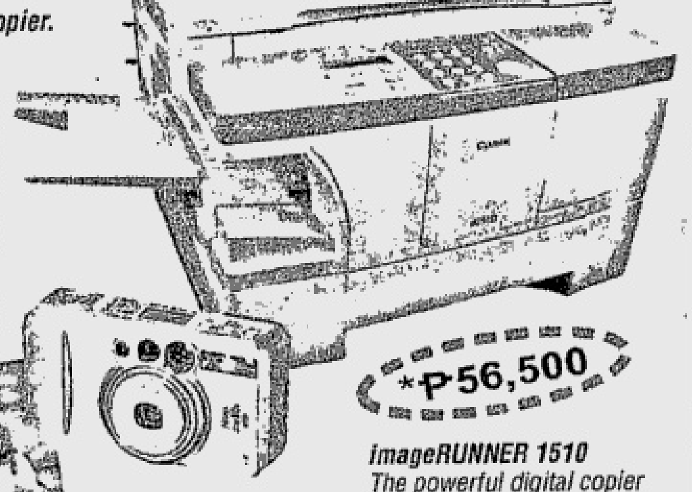

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Editor **Leo Magno**

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Cebu-based teachers' school starts ICT training integration

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

A CEBU-BASED teacher training institution will start integrating information and communications technology (ICT) training modules in its pilot community resource center soon.

The Center for Teacher Excellence (CefTEx) has partnered with Microsoft Philippines to develop ICT training modules for teachers to add to existing curricula.

CefTEx executive director Marilou Flores said they would be implementing the modules in Barangay Tayud, Consolacion in Cebu, where they have been running the community resource center for two years.

Tayud is a CefTEx flagship project under its "In.Cube" initiative, spanning five years and designed to help all members of the community—local government officials, teachers and parents—institutionalize a structured and centralized resource center.

They will be meeting with Tayud's local government executives and schoolteachers to come up with a basic standard for implementing the ICT modules, Flores said.

The crafted ICT modules will be used for regular training in their main office in Cebu City, Flores added.

The modules initially cover basic training on computer usage, moving toward integration with English, math, science, and social sciences courses.

Flores said the idea was to first tackle the need for teachers to learn the basics of computer use before using computers to teach traditional courses.

Flores noted that the Department of Education would help develop the ICT training modules for eventual integration into other teacher training institutions.

CefTEx was created by the Coalition for Better Education, a non-government organization organized by the Aboitiz Group of Companies in an effort to provide a structured learning environment for teachers.

Since its establishment two years ago, CefTEx has trained around 500 teachers from Cebu. It plans to eventually extend its services to teachers in other regions.

Rough sailing in Senate for DICT Bill

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

DESPITE a sweeping approval by congressional review committees, the proposed Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Bill could have rough sailing in the Senate once it starts reviewing of the bill.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., who also heads the Senate Committee on Science and Technology, told Infotech that there were questions regarding the establishment of a DICT, especially at a time when the current administration is reorganizing its agencies in a major austerity program.

He said there were contentions that centralizing the direction of government ICT development by one department could have "different" effects on the unique requirements of other national government offices.

Magsaysay cited the arguments of Sen. Manuel Roxas III who assailed the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) for a "regimented" and "command-and-control" approach toward ICT development in the country.

"What we're hoping for is a more democratized approach in the government's IT strategy, where national government agencies can pursue their modernization as they see fit," Magsaysay said.

Magsaysay said there are no Senate versions of the DICT bill yet although they're waiting for the version from the House of Representatives. From this version, the Senate will review the viability of establishing a DICT.

On the other hand, Magsaysay assured that they would come up with a "win-win" solution to ensure that all parties involved in the DICT bill are satisfied. "The DICT could have some form of responsibility over IT development while other government agencies have the freedom to pursue IT projects on their own," Magsaysay declared.

The DICT bill was approved last Wednesday by the committee on government reorganization and information technology at the House of Representatives and is on its way to a plenary review.

Next-gen Xbox to get grand MTV debut

By Alexander F. Villafania
Contributor

MICROSOFT will unveil the next-generation Xbox on all MTV channels in a continuous 24-hour broadcast spanning the United States, Asia Pacific and Europe on May 12 and 13. Dubbed "MTV Presents: the Next Generation Xbox Revealed," this is considered the first global broadcast for a console game.

The mega-launch will be hosted by "Lord of the Rings" actor Elijah Wood while rock group The Killers will perform during the 30-minute per channel special.

Microsoft has promised to unveil all the features of the Xbox 2 as well as new games and next-generation Xbox Live services.

MTV executive vice president for Integrated Marketing John Shea said in a press statement that the MTV launch of the Xbox 2 would present a revolution in gamer and consumer experience.

"Just as MTV revolutionized the way the world experiences music, the next-generation video game console from Xbox will spark a revolution in how consumers experience games and other forms of digital entertainment," said Peter Moore, corporate vice president of worldwide marketing and publishing for Xbox at Microsoft. "We are ecstatic about our alliance with MTV and unveiling a video game platform in a way that has never been done."

Microsoft has already signed up dozens of game publishers and developers to make games for the new Xbox.

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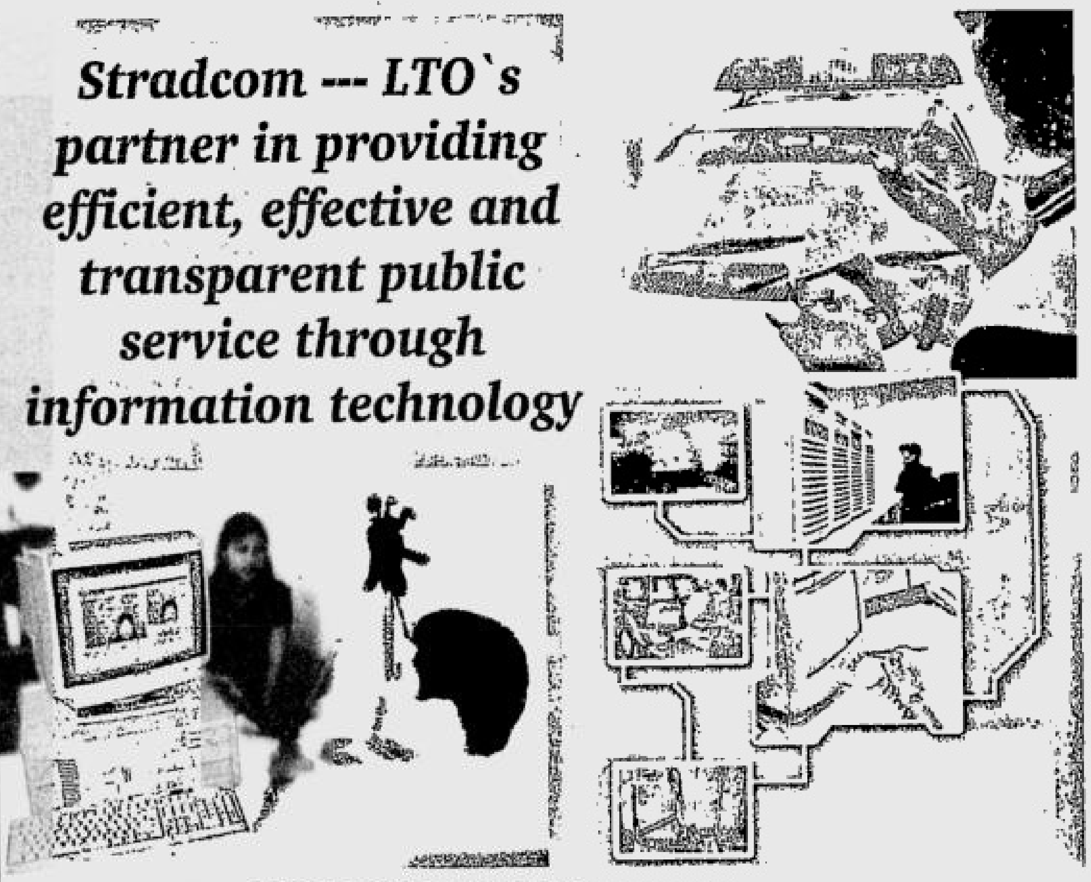

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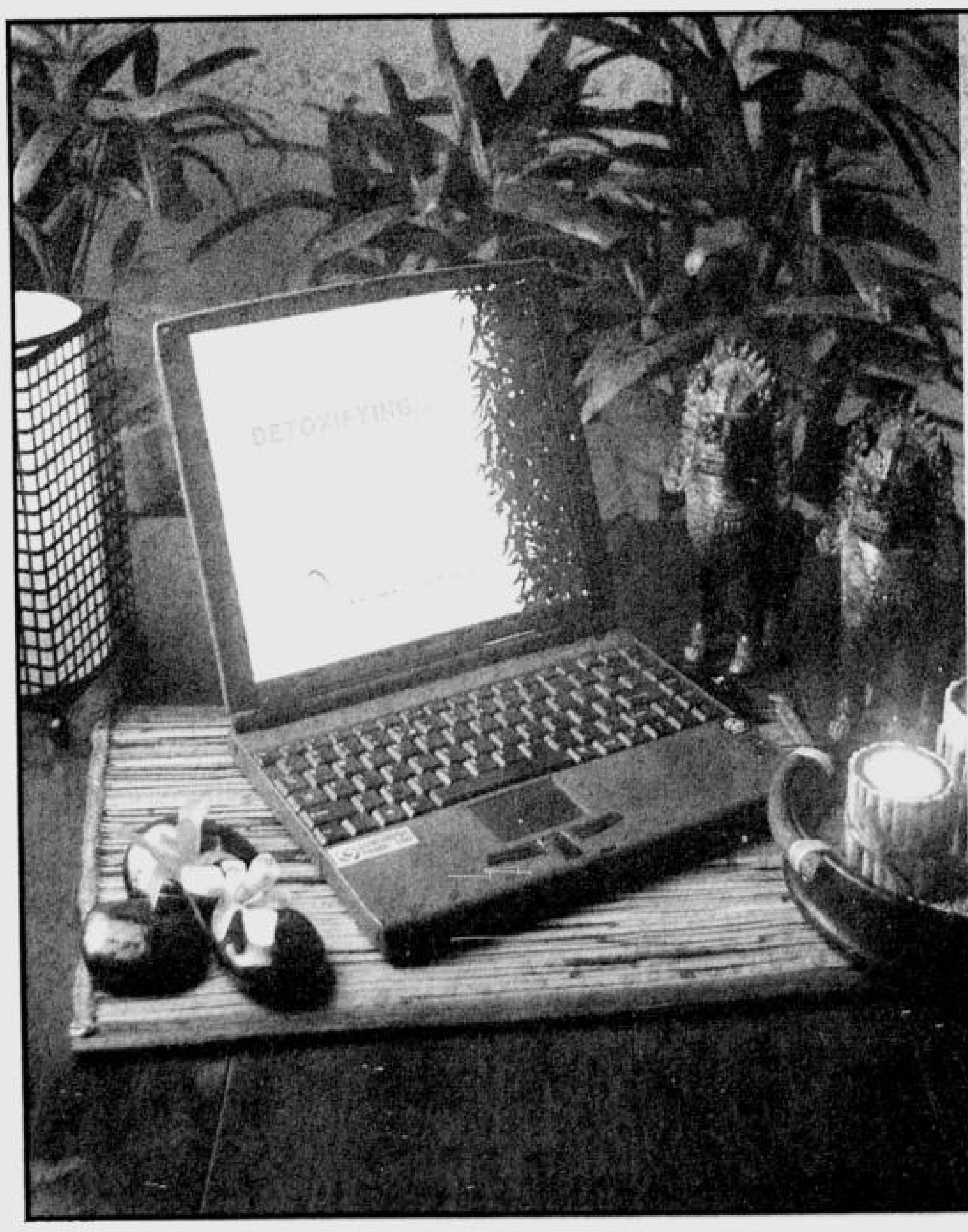

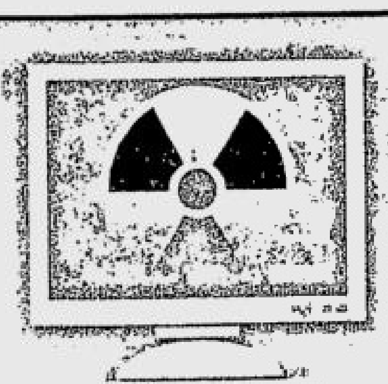

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Crude oil above $55 on US refinery problems

NEW YORK—Oil jumped back above $55 a barrel on Friday as traders said sustained demand and refinery outages could strain US gasoline supplies ahead of peak summer motoring demand.

A spate of violence in the Middle East also revived what dealers called a "terror premium," in which oil prices move higher on fears of potential attacks on energy infrastructure in the oil-rich region.

US light crude settled up $1.19, or 2.2 percent, to $55.39 a barrel, making a four-day rally that has added over $4 to prices.

Oil is 25 percent above levels at the end of 2004 and nearing the all-time peak of $58.28 struck earlier this month.

London Brent gained 96 cents to $54.97 a barrel.

A hefty surplus in US crude oil inventories and signs that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is boosting output again have done little to calm markets worried about insufficient transport and heating fuels to meet demand later this year.

"It's a product-led market," said Colin Tang, an oil trader with French investment bank Calyon in Singapore.

Dealers are increasingly anxious about oil product supplies, particularly in the United States, where a series of refinery glitches has raised fears that plants—already operating near capacity—may struggle to sate rising demand.

"If you believe the worldwide growth in the requirement for oil products will continue and on top of that you have finite refining capacity, then you have to say the cracks are the thing to own," Tang said.

Experts said there was also concern over flaring violence in oil-rich countries of the Middle East.

Crude stockpiles fell last week, their first decline after a nine-week climb put them at the top end of their five-year range. Crude stocks have been bolstered by Opec efforts to top up inventories to create a buffer for anticipated stronger demand in the second half of the year.

Saudi Arabia has told customers it would increase output again in May after ramping up to 9.5 million barrels per day (bpd) last month. But even Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi conceded that the kingdom's ability to control prices had waned.

With the world straining to produce and refine enough oil to meet rapid oil demand growth in Asia, energy security is moving up the agenda for big consumers, including the United States. *Reuters*

Fed likely to stick to 'measured' hikes

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, New York—US inflation pressures should recede absent a renewed energy-price spike, allowing the Federal Reserve to stick to a gradual pace of interest-rate rises, a top Fed official said on Friday.

In a speech in which he warned against complacency on historically unusual imbalances in the US and global economies, Fed Governor Donald Kohn expressed optimism on both the outlook for US economic growth and inflation.

"If growth is sustained and inflation remains contained, we are likely to raise rates further at a measured pace," he told a conference at the Levy Economics Institute of Bard College.

"Barring further sizable increases in the prices of oil and natural gas, both core and headline inflation rates should moderate later this year," he said, adding that expectations of future inflation appeared stable despite higher energy costs.

He also said that while surging energy costs had taken a toll on US consumers recently, most forecasts were still for a solid pace of economic expansion.

Kohn said the benchmark overnight federal funds rate was still below the level needed to keep inflation at bay over the medium term and said the slack in the US economy had "eroded appreciably" since the 2001 recession.

The Fed has raised overnight rates from a 1958 low of 1 percent to the current level of 2.75 percent in seven consecutive quarter-point steps from last June.

Most economists expect this campaign of "measured" rate rises to continue when officials next gather on May 3. Still, markets have wrestled with whether the Fed could pick up the pace amid signs of rising price pressures or whether it might soon pause with lofty oil prices slowing growth.

Taking questions from the audience, Kohn said that while the Fed expects to be able to continue to move rates up gradually, it would not hesitate to abandon that approach should economic data dictate."

If the economy goes somewhere else, we'll go somewhere else," he said. *Reuters*

Wall St. faces earnings and key data deluge

NEW YORK—After a roller coaster ride through the past week, investors will have to navigate a torrent of company results and economic indicators this week for any signs of a clear direction for US stocks.

Major companies reporting this week include Kimberly-Clark Corp. on Monday, American Express Co. and Lockheed Martin Corp. on Tuesday, Boeing Co. and Colgate-Palmolive Co. on Wednesday, and Microsoft Corp. and Exxon Mobil Corp.on Thursday.

This week's economic data includes the advanced reading of first-quarter US gross domestic product on Thursday.

Investors will scrutinize the GDP data to get a sense of whether more aggressive rate increases may be in the offing next month or later this year.

The Federal Open Market Committee, the Federal Reserve's policy-making panel, meets on May 3.

Just as stronger company earnings news and positive economic data pulled the stock market back from the brink last Thursday—only to fall again last Friday—any negative news in this week's corporate results and economic indicators could spook jittery investors.

"The mood changed because earnings were OK, so with another flood of earnings this week, we need to confirm what people saw in the last couple of days," Peter Boockvar, equity strategist at Miller Tabak & Co., said on Friday.

"If earnings turn out to be very mixed, then that mood can change very easily. Thursday could very well have been a one-day wonder. If we can gain more feel on the economy based on earnings or economic data next week, that will be the driver."

In the past week's wild ride, the Dow Jones industrial average ended up 0.70 percent, the Standard & Poor's 500 edged up 0.83 percent and tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index rose 1.26 percent.

Other economic indicators this week include April consumer confidence data on Tuesday *Reuters*

Execs' losing confidence, says survey

NEW YORK—Business executives around the world have lost some confidence from a year ago in the prospects for the global economy, according to a quarterly poll released on Friday.

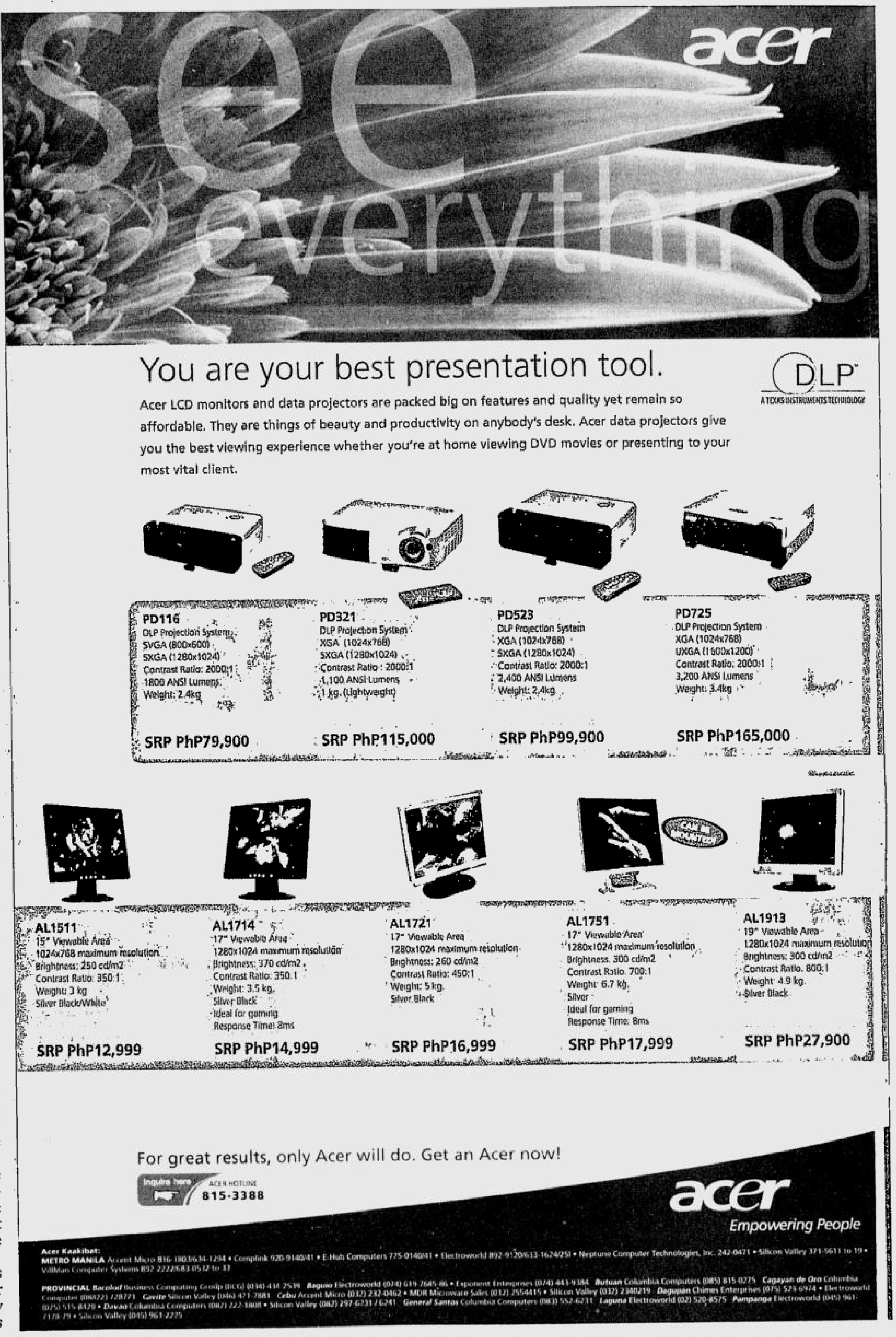
McKinsey & Co., a management consulting firm, said its global survey of executives' confidence index fell to 59 in March compared with 67 in the same period a year ago. The March index was flat with the survey conducted in November.

Notably, business leaders in developed Asian countries expressed a poor outlook for their regions, in sharp contrast to sentiment a year ago.

"In the Asia-Pacific region's developed nations, such as Japan and South Korea, executives are losing confidence in the short-term economic prospects of their respective countries and industries," the survey said.

Meanwhile, executives from India were the most confident about their nation's prospects, with 8 in 10 saying the economy of the world's second-most populous nation will improve in the next six months.

The McKinsey survey was based on over 9,300 responses from 130 countries. *Reuters*



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  - submit the filled out Warranty Card to any Canon Authorized Reseller or send to the Canon Marketing Philippines Head Office at the Marvin Plaza Bldg., 2153 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.
- Warranty Cards must be sent in on or before 5 pm of May 30, 2005 to qualify for the raffle.
- Raffle will be conducted at the Canon Marketing Philippines Head Office on May 31, 2005.
- Winners will be notified by registered mail.
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Filipino pharmaceutical execs induct new officers

THE NEWLY organized Philippine Chamber of the Pharmaceutical Industry (PCPI) inducted its new set of officers March 31 during a program held at the Discovery Suites in Ortigas. Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit was the guest speaker and inducting officer.

Michael Francis dela Cruz of Sydenham Labs Inc was elected president. He outlined the organization's objectives for this year, which include the need to make medicines more affordable, work for a more vibrant Filipino pharmaceutical industry, and further improve the industry's technical capability to meet global competition.

For his part, Dayrit promised the PCPI strong government commitment to support the local pharmaceutical industry. "The step you have taken is a milestone. We will work with you closely to make sure that the Filipino pharmaceutical industry gains ascendancy within the decade," he said.

PCPI members have done a lot of initiatives in making quality medicines affordable to Filipinos. Prices have remained reasonable and within the reach of consumers to continue their medications in its full term. Consumers only need to ask for an equivalent generic choice in the drugstore.

PCPI is composed of almost 100 Filipino pharmaceutical companies. Committees have been formed to address the needs of the consumers and the Filipino companies: technical committee for quality and standards of products and manufacturing firms, a training committee to source training groups to upgrade skills of employees, and an advocacy team to ensure that the public will have access to globally competitive products.

The other members of the PCPI board of trustees for 2005 are William Fabroa (Wyce Pharma Philippines Inc), Edward Isaac (Verheilen Pharma Inc), Marilou Buensuceso (Elin Pharmaceuticals Inc), Teresita Chan (Basic Pharma Corp), lawyer Leah Sebastian (United Laboratories Inc), Rudy Calma (Randril International Co Inc), Zenaida Balajadia (Lloyd Laboratories Inc), James Dio (Therapharma Inc), Thelma Go (Scheele Labs Philippines Inc), and Sheila Mae Velilla (Biolink Pharma).

Combination antihypertensive can delay kidney disease

ONE OF the most common complications of type 2 (adult onset) diabetes is a type of kidney disease known as diabetic nephropathy, a condition where the kidneys become less and less efficient in eliminating toxins from the body in the urine.

A recent study has demonstrated that a combination of trandolapril, an angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor, and verapamil, a calcium channel blocker, reduced the incidence of protein in the urine or microalbuminuria, an early indicator of kidney disease, compared with placebo (sugar pill).

The Bergamo Nephrologic Diabetes Complication Trial (Benedict), published in the New England Journal of Medicine, examined the effects of various combinations of the ACE inhibitor, trandolapril, and the nondihydropyridine calcium channel blocker, verapamil, during the onset of microalbuminuria in more than 1,200 patients with type 2 diabetes and hypertension for about three and a half years.

In addition, the study noted that the trandolapril/verapamil combination helped patients reduce blood pressure with fewer additional medications. Blood pressure reduction is also important to reduce the risk of kidney and cardiovascular diseases like heart attack and stroke.

The Benedict study results underscore the potential role of combination antihypertensive medicine in delaying the onset of microalbuminuria, which is an important treatment goal for individuals with hypertension and diabetes.

"Independent of blood pressure, the study showed that the combination of trandolapril/verapamil was able to reduce the incidence of kidney disease in the high risk diabetic hypertensive patients who, for all intents and purposes, have normal kidney function," said Dr. Loewe Go, a consultant at the Heart Institute of St. Luke's Medical Center.

"Doctors do not have to wait for the early signs of kidney disease before treating patients with the right combination of drugs," Go added.

"The results of the Benedict trial are important because they support the role of an ACE inhibitor when used alone or as part of a combination such as trandolapril/verapamil to treat high blood pressure and reduce an early indicator of kidney and cardiovascular disease," said Dr. George Bakris, vice chair of the department of preventive medicine, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago.

By 2030, there will be about 370 million people worldwide with type 2 diabetes and approximately one third of these individuals will develop nephropathy and require dialysis therapy. About 10,000 Filipinos suffer from end-stage renal disease each year, according to data from the National Kidney and Transplant Institute. Of these, more than half are due to diabetes and hypertension.

The trandolapril/verapamil combination in a fixed dose combination will soon be available as a prescription medicine.

Jetstar Asia commences daily flights to Manila

JETSTAR Asia announced that it would begin services to Manila, Philippines on April 27, with the introduction of daily flights between Manila's commercial passenger hub, Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) and Singapore's Changi Airport.

To celebrate the Manila launch, a special introductory price for one-way airfares from Manila to Singapore is offered at US$59. After which, everyday low fares will start from US$79.

"We are delighted to be able to fly from Ninoy Aquino International airport and further strengthen the links between the Philippines and Singapore," said Jetstar Asia CEO Ken Ryan.

"With Jetstar Asia's great ticket prices and the convenience of flying from the primary international airport, we're very confident that our Manila-Singapore service will be hugely popular with Filipinos looking to visit Singapore."

Jetstar Asia's flight from Singapore to Manila will be 3K561 leaving at 7:50 a.m. and arriving at 11:20 a.m., and the return flight from Manila will be Jetstar Asia flight 3K562 at 12:20 p.m. arriving Singapore at 3:45 p.m.

"We would like to extend our congratulations to Jetstar Asia in anticipation of its inaugural flight into Philippines," said Rocson Chang, area director, Philippines and Brunei for the Singapore Tourism Board. "Singapore remains Asean's No. 1 tourism source into the Philippines. Similarly, 2004 saw a spectacular growth of Philippine visitors to Singapore-up 40 percent against 2003. The arrival of Jetstar Asia will serve to enhance this strong tourism traffic and further cement the already excellent bilateral relationship between both our republics and our peoples."

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FIRST LIFE AGENCY MANAGERS IN ATLANTA

First Guarantee Life Assurance Company Inc (First Life) agency managers attend the 2005 General Agents and Managers Association (Gama) LAMP Annual Convention March 13 to 16 in Atlanta, Georgia. Gama International president Robert H. Baccigalupi CLU, ChFC CLTCF (center) and past president Burr Anderson CLU ChFC (left) join the First Life agency managers (from left) Lourdes T. Yao, Lorna C. Lao, Ester C. Sy, Josie T. Gotohio and Teresita T. Perez at the convention. The Gama-LAMP Annual Convention is the best forum for industry experts and leaders in the global life insurance industry.

BOARDWALK DOES IT AGAIN

The 20th Parangal ng Bayan Foundation Inc awards Boardwalk as the Outstanding Direct Selling Company of the Year consecutively for two years. The affair was held at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati April 2. Shown, from left, are Angel Lumban, executive assistant to the vice president (BBVI), Mariton Ereneta, sales division head (BBVI), Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Cancio G. Garcia, Imelda Madera, vice president (BBVI), Bernardo H. Madera, president (BBVI) and Sister Vicky C. Dizon, chair of Parangal ng Bayan Foundation Inc.

1954
Commencement Exercises
ARCH 3 05

CENTRAL COLLEGES OF THE PHILIPPINES' GRADUATION RITES

The Central Colleges of the Philippines (CCP) in Quezon City held its commencement exercises March 30 at the Philippine International Convention Center. Secretary Roberto 'Obet' Pagdanganan was the guest of honor and commencement speaker during the rites, which was highlighted by the conferment of baccalaureate degrees by the CCP president lawyer Crispino P. Reyes to the new graduates of engineering, architecture, computer sciences, business and office administration, accountancy, optometry, education, liberal arts, and master's degrees in arts, public administration, and business administration. The occasion was made doubly significant by the giving of a special award by the CCP board of trustees to Rommel C. Pabaya, a CCP engineering graduate who ranked 9th in the May 2004 Civil Engineering Licensure Examination on the top of the cash award of P20,000 earlier granted by the school.

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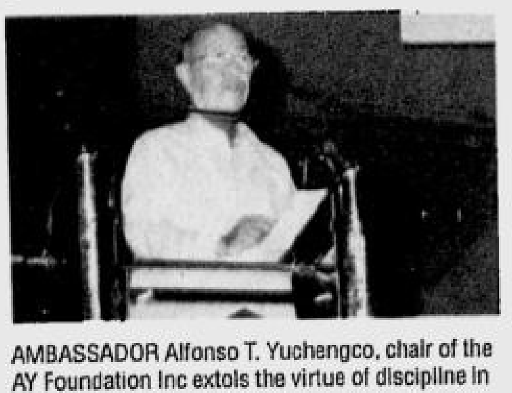
Georgie on Ice White is a clean, pure fragrance for the woman who is classy in her simplicity. Georgie on Ice White is a combination of jasmine, lemon, woody, and musky notes that complement her innate class.

Georgie on Ice Pink evokes the fragrance of romance. It's for the woman whose eyes are bright and cheeks flushed with love. Georgie on Ice Pink is a fresh, cheerful, and exhilarating blend of bergamot and peach, Lily of the Valley, and sweet, ambery notes that will fill and uplift her senses.

The Georgie on Ice scents are available at Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines (formerly known as House of Sara Lee) and authorized Sara Lee dealers nationwide. For inquiries, call hotline 810-5402, or e-mail customer.relations@saraleedirectselling.ph.

2005 National Discipline awardees honored



AMBASSADOR Alfonso T. Yuchengco, chair of the AY Foundation Inc extols the virtue of discipline in conferring the National Discipline Awards to 591 high school students representing the same number of schools from all over the country.

THE AY Foundation Inc (AYF) honored the 2005 National Discipline awardees in fitting ceremonies held recently at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium of the RCBC Plaza in Makati City.

Now on its 15th year, the National Discipline Awards pays tribute to graduating high school students who showed remarkable courage, integrity, and discipline. There is a total number of 591 National Discipline Awardees this year representing the same number of high schools all over the country. Awardees are chosen by their schools' screening committees.

Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco, chair of the AY Foundation Inc, believes that responsible citizenship and discipline are two virtues that our society sorely needs at this point in our history.

"Our awardees therefore hope to fill our need for modern heroes whose lives and heroism we must be told. For this reason, we, of the Yuchengco Group of Companies, recommit ourselves to developing in our young people the discipline of mind, character and work. The National Discipline Awards of the AY Foundation will ensure that we achieve that", stressed Yuchengco in his opening remarks during the ceremonies.

Keynote speaker Senate President Franklin Drilon commended the AY Foundation for conferring these awards to deserving high school graduates. "It did not surprise me that AY Foundation is spearheading this worthwhile activity. The Yuchengcos, especially Ambassador Yuchengco, is an embodiment of discipline," Drilon furthered.

The success of the National Discipline Awards gave birth to Cycle (Championing the Youth for Community Leadership), a leadership training and values formation seminar that instills a keen sense of social responsibility among the youth through volunteer work in depressed communities.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCE OF CEBU
ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE COUNCIL
Office of the Cebu Provincial Governor
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

NOTICE/INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

Notice is hereby given that the Province of Cebu, through its Economic Enterprise Council (EEC), is intending to develop one of its properties for commercial use on a Build Transfer Operate (BTO) scheme, more particularly described as follows:

Lot No. 3-A-2 and a portion of Lot No. 3-A-1-B, containing a total area of 27,351 square meters, more or less, located in Banilad, Cebu City, previously occupied by the Cebu International School and Cebu Tennis Club.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

a. Rental rate of at least P35.00/sq.m. per month with an escalation rate of 5% per year, applicable on the sixth year of lease and every year thereafter;
b. Sales percentage share of ½ of 1% of gross sales or P200,000.00, whichever is higher, paid monthly to the Province of Cebu;
c. Investment cost for site development and structure construction not less than P250M, with building and site development plan subject to approval by the Economic Enterprise Council. Built up facility to be turned over upon completion to the Province of Cebu and to be fully insured with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) in accordance with the appraisal of GSIS, in favor of Cebu Province. Premium shall be paid by the proponent;
d. Operation of facility and use of the property shall be for a maximum of twenty-five (25) years.

In relation thereto, any and all interested parties are hereby INVITED to submit their LETTERS OF INTENT and other required documents, which shall be the basis for the evaluation of qualified bidders, on or before May 10, 2005 to the EEC Secretariat, Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, 3rd Floor, Cebu Capitol, Cebu City. Notice of Bidding shall be issued to qualified proponents.

For ready reference and guidance, copies of the titles, technical descriptions and sketch plan of the said lot are available, for a fee of P5,000.00 at the EEC Secretariat.

(Sgd.) **GWENDOLYN F. GARCIA**
Cebu Provincial Governor

(PDI – April 19, 25 & May 2, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Office of the AVP-Northern Mindanao Cluster
Cagayan de Oro City
SSS Bldg., Carmen, Cag. De Oro City ☎(088) 8583793; 8583792; Fax (088) 8583790

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

SECURITY AND JANITORIAL SERVICES

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** is inviting bidders for a two (2) year contract for security and janitorial services to be rendered at the following branches in the Northern Mindanao Area:

Security Service for: Cagayan de Oro (15), Butuan (6), San Francisco (3), Gingoog (3), Iligan (5), Valencia (4), Oroquieta (3), Ozamis (3), Surigao City (3) Tandag (3), Camiguin (3), Nasipit (6) Total: 57 guards	Approved Budget for Two-Year Contract: P 12,747,758.40
Contract Duration:	2-years (May 1, 2006 to April 30, 2008)
Source of Fund:	Maintenance and Repair – Building – Security Service
Janitorial Service for: Cagayan de Oro (15), Butuan (2), San Francisco (1), Gingoog (1), Iligan (1), Valencia (1), Oroquieta (1), Ozamis (1), Surigao City (1), Tandag (1), Camiguin (1) Total: 26 Janitors	Approved Budget for Two-Year Contract: P 4,839,925.92
Contract Duration:	2-years (April 21, 2006 to April 20, 2008)
Source of Fund:	Maintenance and Repair – Building – Security Service

Application for Eligibility is open to all Security and Janitorial Agencies with at least 5 years experience and with valid license or business permit to undertake the service described herein and must not have been "Blacklisted" by any government agency nor have violated any provisions of the contract with past and existing clients.

Distribution of Eligibility Requirements to interested bidders will be from April 26, 2005 to May 9, 2005 by the BAC-Northern Mindanao Cluster-Secretariat, OAVP-Northern Mindanao Cluster, 2nd Floor, SSS Bldg., Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements* for Security and Janitorial Services will be on May 18, 2005 and May 19, 2005 respectively at 2:00 p.m. (original and photocopies for authentication*) for screening on a pass/fail criteria to the BAC-Northern Cluster Secretariat.

The Terms of Reference, Bid Proposal Form and Draft of the Proposed Contract will be distributed starting May 23-26, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 for Security Services and P1,000.00 for Janitorial Services.

All eligible bidders issued with bid documents are required to attend the Pre-bidding Conference on June 1, 2005 for Security Services and June 2, 2005 for Janitorial Services at 2:00 p.m. at the Conference Room, OAVP-Northern Mindanao Cluster, 2nd Floor, SSS Bldg., Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City.

Submission and Opening of duly accomplished Bid Proposal will be on June 15, 2005 for Security Services and June 16, 2005 for Janitorial Services at 2:00 p.m. at the Conference Room, OAVP-Northern Mindanao Cluster, 2nd Floor, SSS Bldg., Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City.

For Inquiry, please call telephone numbers (088) 858 3793/858 3794 or (08822) 724510/727707.

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **JOSEFINA M. OLAN-FORNILOS**
AVP & Chairman
Bids & Awards Committee
Northern Mindanao Cluster

(PDI - April 25, 2005)

PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City

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Academic Year 2005

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I. **Pediatric Cardiology**
- 3 years Residency in General Pediatric accredited by PPS
- at least passed written examination for Diplomate in Pediatrics by the PPS
- ***Deadline for submission of application is on April 30, 2005***
- ***Academic Year 2005 starts on June 1, 2005***

II. **Adult/Pediatric Pulmonary Medicine**
- PCP Diplomate
- ***Deadline for submission of application is on April 30, 2005***
- ***Academic Year 2005 starts on July 1, 2005***

General Requirements for Application for Fellowship:

1. Medical Diploma
2. Transcript of Records with the Weighted General Average
3. Itemized Board Rating
4. Three (3) Letter of Recommendation (coming from different Doctors specifically the Training Officer &/or Director of the previous training programs)
5. Four (4) pcs. 2"x2" picture colored
6. Certificate of Residency in required specialty
7. Specialty Board Certificate in required specialty

Please address your communications to
JOSE A. YULDE, M.D.
Assistant Director
Office of Education and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can e-mail to oer@phc.gov.ph

(PDI – April 24, 25 & 26, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region XIV (Serving ARMM), Cotabato City
Tel. Nos. 421-2407, Fax No. 421-2128

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) in Region XIV, Cotabato City, invites all interested **LABOR CONTRACTORS** to apply for eligibility & to bid for the Procurement of Handling Services in moving its 2005 NFA rice and palay at the following areas:

PROVINCE/ WAREHOUSE	ESTIMATED VOLUME (In Bags of 50 Kilos) TO BE HANDLED	Approved Budget Cost (Php)
MAGUINDANAO		
LOT 1, SPGC/MPG, Tacurong City	18,000	54,000.00
LOT 2, GID, Shariff Aguak	119,000	357,000.00
LOT 3, CIC, Cotabato City	30,000	90,000.00
LOT 4, R & B, Upi	47,360	142,080.00
LOT 5, Philtrade V. S. Kudarat	180,000	540,000.00
LOT 6, RPA, Parang	164,640	464,040.00
	559,000	1,647,120.00
LANAO DEL SUR		
LOT 7, Marawi City	96,340	289,020.00
LOT 8, Malabang	23,360	70,080.00
	119,700	359,100.00
BASILAN		
LOT 9, GID, Isabela City	282,200	846,600.00
SULU		
LOT 10, GID, Jolo	19,750	56,875.00
TAWI-TAWI		
LOT 11, GID, Bongao	78,000	234,000.00
AGGREGATE TOTAL:	1,058,650	3,143,695.00

The handling (Procurement/Dispersal/Distribution/In-Warehouse/Integrated Services, etc...) activity calls for the supply of labor force services only. Bids may be lot of choice, by lots (more than one lot) or the entire lot.

Schedule of Bidding Activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
1. Issuance of Application for Eligibility Requirements & Bid Documents	May 04-11, 2005
2. Submission of LOI	May 04-11, 2005
3. Pre-Bid Conference	May 25, 2005
4. Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements and bid forms	June 06, 2005 / Not later than 08:30 AM
5. Opening of Bids	June 06, 2005 at 09:00 AM

All interested parties in the bidding, must be duly registered labor contractor. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid tender forms shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PhP 2,000.00.

The venue for the pre-bid conference and bidding proper will be at NFA Conference Room, NFA RO XIV, ORC Compound, Gov. Gutierrez Ave., Cotabato City.

Bidding procedures shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and as provided in the instruction to bidders.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) OFELIA M. SERO
Asst. Regional Manager and
Chairman, RBAC

(PDI - April 25 & May 2, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
BUTUAN CITY WATER DISTRICT
Gov. Jose A. Rosales Avenue, Butuan City
Tel. No. (085) 342-3145/46 Fax No. (085) 341-5008; 815-1268
E-mail address: bcwd2@skyinet.net

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Butuan City Water District hereby invites suppliers and distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid, in accordance with I.R.R. of R.A. 9184, for the supply and delivery of Microlab Equipment, Water Treatment Equipment and Electro-Mechanical Equipment:

PACKAGE 1: MICROLAB EQUIPMENT

Item #	Qty	Items / Description
1.1	1 Unit	Autoclave, Top-Loading (Capacity: ≥ 50L)
1.2	1 Unit	UV Lamp, Portable, Light Weight & Germicidal
1.3	2 Units	Colony Counter, Pen Type
1.4	1 Unit	Desiccator Cabinet
1.5	1 Unit	Oven, Dryer / Sterilizer (Capacity: ≥ 111L)
		Approved Budget: Php 1,100,000.00
		Bidding Fee: Php 1,500.00

PACKAGE 2: WATER TREATMENT EQUIPMENT

2.1	3 Sets	Chlorine Regulator w/ Ejector, 100ppd
2.2	2 Units	Industrial Digital Weighing Scale (Capacity: ≥100Kg.)
2.3	2 Sets	Chlorine Comparator Kits, High Range
		Approved Budget: Php 530,000.00
		Bidding Fee: Php 1,000.00

PACKAGE 3: ELECTRO-MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

3.1	1 Set	Centrifugal Pump Motor Set, 3HP, 220V, 1 Phase
3.2	1 Set	Submersible Pump Motor Set, 60 HP, 460V, 3 Phase
		Approved Budget: Php 500,000.00
		Bidding Fee: Php 1,000.00

Specifications, details and bidding documents are available to interested applicants upon payment of a non-refundable fee as indicated per package from April 26, 2005 to May 9, 2005 at the BAC Secretariat during its business hours.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on May 18, 2005 at 9:00 AM BCWD Time at the Training Hall of BCWD Administration Building. Submission and opening of sealed bids shall follow on May 31, 2005 at the same time and venue.

Butuan City Water District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or formality therein, to assume no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their bids, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd) JORGE L. GUDUYO, C.E.
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-April 25 & May 2, 2005)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO BUY

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested parties to buy through negotiated sale, a one (1) unit Beechcraft King Air E-90 Model 1976 with accessories and spare parts under the following terms and conditions:

1. The sale shall be on an As-Is-Where-Is basis;
2. Interested buyers shall submit a proposal indicating the mode of payment;
3. A deposit equivalent to 10% of the proposed purchase price shall be enclosed with the proposal;
4. The 10% deposit shall be in the form of a Cashier's/Manager's check payable to LANDBANK;
5. The deposit shall be applied as partial payment in case the offer is accepted by the bank and shall be forfeited in favor of the bank in case of failure to pay the balance within 20 calendar days after Notice of Award;
6. Interested buyer shall bear the cost of transfer fees/taxes and all other incidental expenses to transfer ownership; and,
7. LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids and/or accept proposals that the Committee may consider advantageous to the Bank.

All prospective buyers are enjoined to see the actual condition of the property at the Asian Aeronautics Hangar, Domestic Airport, Pasay City upon prior arrangement with Mr. Alan Morales or Ms. Yvette Albaniel through telephone numbers 405-7360 and 551-2200 locals 2323 and 7360.

Proposals shall be submitted to the Chairman, Head Office Committee on Bids and Awards (HOCBA), Land Bank of the Philippines through the Head, General Services Department located at 25th floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M.H. del Pilar cor. Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila.

HEAD, GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

PDI--April 25 & May 2, 2005)

NFA to advance fad program

THE National Food Authority (NFA) will advance the implementation of its Farmers as Distributors (FAD) program starting next month to expand its network of rice distributors.

A total of 50,000 metric tons or one million bags of rice had been allocated to the FAD program this year. The rice shall be sold at P16 per kilogram and P18/kg for the regular-milled (RMR) and well-milled (WMR) varieties, respectively.

Under the FAD, farmers are allowed to distribute part of the volume that the NFA sells during the lean months from July to September for stabilization purposes. The FAD was launched in 2002 in response to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's directive to tap the farmers as partners in the implementation of the food security and stabilization programs of the government.

Volume of rice for distribution under the FAD shall be prorated on a regional basis based on the harvested area for the preceding two years. Qualified FOs within the region shall then share in the volume allocated for their region based on the set rules of the program.

To qualify under the FAD, interested FOs must be registered, at least for the immediate past year, with any of the following: Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR), Bureau of Rural Workers (BRW) or the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). Registration in any of these agencies is also a requirement for the issuance of NFA license.

Furthermore, the FO must also be a member of a local farmer's action council or the Philippine Farmers' Advisory Board (PFAB) and a holder of NFA license as retailer, wholesaler or other incidental lines of activities such as warehousing and transporting.

Finally, the FO must also submit to the concerned NFA provincial office a Certificate of Operations or Certificate of Good Standing issued by the appropriate registering agency.

For further inquiry on the Farmers as Distributors program of the NFA, the public may send in their concern through cell phone number 0917-6210927.

Republic of the Philippines
National Electrification Administration
Quezon City

NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

GENERAL MANAGER

FOR
SURIGAO DEL SUR I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(SURSECO I)
San Fernando, Bislig City

Qualifications:
- 30-50 YEARS OLD
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Bislig City

Starting Salary P35,000.00

Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th Floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline for submission of application forms is on 13 May 2005.

(Sgd.) **EDITA S. BUENO**
Administrator

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On View: Wednesday, 27th April 2005 - 9:00am to 2:00pm
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Please bring valid ID to be presented during registration

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For further information please contact Maggie Calderon-Alicante at
Tel: 852 2910 loc. 111 Email: mags.calderon@henrybutcher.com

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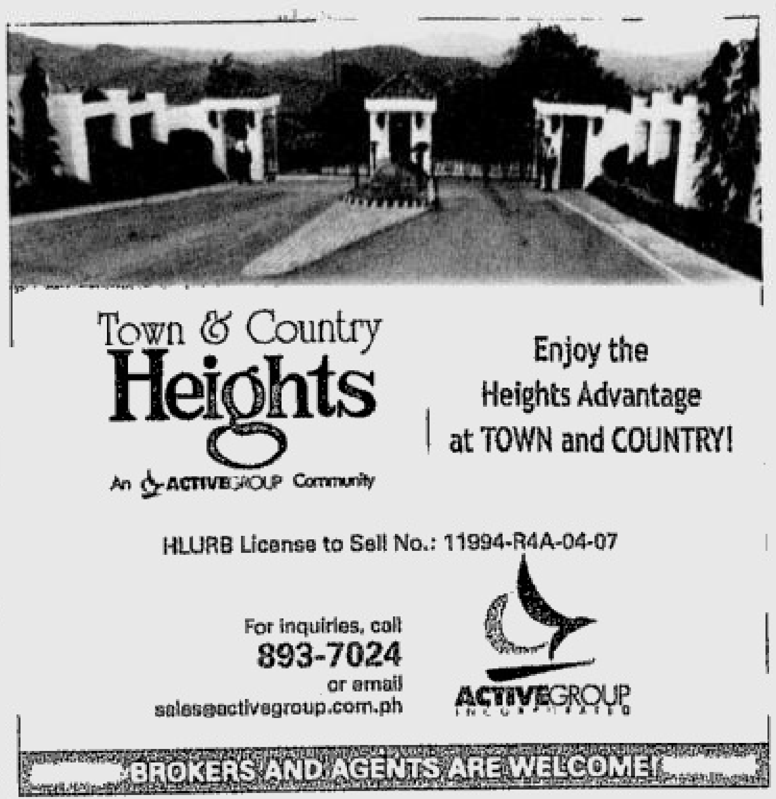
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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late TERESA M. ANDRADE has been extrajudicially settled between her heirs as per Doc. No. 162; Page 34; Book No. XX11; Series of 2004 before Atty. Esperanza C. Doroja, Notary Public of Manila.
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Psalm 23-4

VICENTE JOSE YAP VELEZ M.D.

(Enteng / Vic)

FPCP, FPCC, FACP
June 19, 1948 - April 20, 2005
of Cagayan de Oro City

He is survived by his wife **Ma. Lourdes Montilla Velez** and children **Dr. Vicente Jose, Jr.** and wife **Dr. Giselle Santos Velez, Gil Blas, Leona Mercedes,** and **John Francis**; Parents **Dr. Blas Ch. Velez** (†) and **Eva Yap Velez** (†); Sisters **Dr. Evalynne** and **Dr. Joseph Braun, Jocelyn**; Brothers **Blas III** and **Marina Casino Velez, Apolinar II** and **Vilma Ormillada Velez.** Cousins, nephews, nieces, and grand-nieces and other relatives from Cagayan de Oro, Manila, New York, and New Jersey.

Relatives request the readers, friends, and colleagues to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Ipil Room, Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque. Daily Masses are held at 8:00 p.m.

Thanksgiving Mass will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 26, 2005 at the Manila Memorial Chapel, Sucat, Parañaque.

His body will be cremated and brought to Cagayan de Oro City for interment.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."– 2 Corinthians 5:8

GERMAN VALENTE DIVINO, JR.

of Las Vegas, Nevada and Botolan, Zambales

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on April 23, 2005.

His wife **Eleanor** and children **Jimmy, Dinna, Cora** and **Dom**; children-in-law **Joanie, Rafael, Del** and **Ina**, and grandchildren **Alison, Emily, Jackson, Claudia Marcela, Elena & Ana Victoria**; brother **Jose**, aunts **Genara & Bonifacia**, sisters-in-law & brothers-in-law, nieces & nephews, loving cousins and other relatives, Tau Alphans and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Chapel C, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc. Guadalupe, Makati City.

Cremation schedule at Loyola Crematorium, Guadalupe, Makati City on Wednesday, April 27, 2005 at 12:00 noon.

SALVACION "SIONY" S. ALQUIZA

VP – Luzon, Mother Butler Mission Guilds

Peacefully joined her Creator
on April 23, 2005 at the age of 58.

Her loving husband, **BGen. Rosalino A. Alquiza**; her daughter **Avi**; son **RJ**; brothers **Marino** and **Carlito Siason**; sisters **Carmen** and **Juanita**; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest and everlasting happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at the Village Chapel, St. Ignatius Village, Quezon City. Interment will be on Thursday, April 28, 2005 at The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City after the 1:30 p.m. Mass at the St. Ignatius Village Chapel.

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Remembering Terezin at the CCP

ON the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the liberation of the Terezin Concentration Camp and Ghetto near Prague, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic, Stanislav Slavicky in cooperation with the Ambassador of Israel, Yehoshua Sagi, the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra present Remembering Terezin.

During the Second World War, the Nazis converted the Czech town of Terezin into a ghetto they called Theresienstadt. More than 150,000 Jews beginning with the citizens of the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia were forced into the town. Terezin held the largest concentration of artists, musicians, scientists and scholars. At a time when Jews were banned from going to school, the town became the bosom of culture and art. Amidst the Holocaust and great suffering, they were able to put up a library, a literary magazine, lectures and theatrical performances. In the beginning the Jews thought that in Terezin they would be safe, but it was only a matter of time when the Nazis started transporting people to death camps such as Auschwitz. Of the 15,000 children that were sent to Terezin, less than 100 survived.

Remembering Terezin pays tribute to the victims of the Holocaust in the Czech Lands. The event will highlight the music of Czech Jewish composers and the works of the children from the concentration camp. The two-day event will open on April 28 at 6:00 PM with an exhibit entitled I Never Saw Another Butterfly at the CCP Little Theater Lobby. The exhibit features the drawings and poetry of the children who were sent to Terezin. On same day, the Czech Embassy will be screening the film Transport from Paradise at the CCP Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (Little Theater).

On April 29 at 8:00 PM is a concert billed as Music from Terezin at the CCP Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (Main Theater). The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Music Director Eugene Castillo with guest Israeli pianist Noam Sivan will be performing the works of Czech Jewish composers Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein and Victor Ullman who died during the Holocaust.

For more information, please call the PPO office at Tel. No. 832 1125 loc. 1608 to 1610.

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BUSINESS

SSS halts decline of pension fund

By Doris C. Dumlao and Michelle V. Remo

THE STATE-OWNED Social Security System, which earlier feared that its pension fund would be depleted by 2015, has arrested the decline in its reserves and stretched the life of its funds by four to six more years.

An SSS official said that with the the pressure lifted, the pension firm need not implement a hike in contributions.

Corazon de La Paz, SSS president and chief executive officer, told reporters that the life of its fund is now estimated to last until 2019 to 2021.

Earlier, SSS officials warned that the fund could only last until 2015 if there would be no immediate hike in members' contributions.

"The (halt in the decline) was brought about by reform programs the SSS has initiated," De La Paz said during an interview.

De La Paz attributed the cause to the much improved economic environment and the positive impact of the one percentage hike in members' contribution to 9.4 percent of earnings in early 2003.

The SSS, which serves employees from the private sector, also said in its website that it had recovered over P40 million in back payments from delinquent contributors through its amnesty program for short-term loans.

Under the program, members are allowed to settle their liabilities without having to pay penalties.

According to De La Paz, the SSS is now pushing for an increase in members' contributions, saying that this will inject health into its funds.

Currently, an SSS member allots 9.4 percent of his or her salary as contribution to the pension fund.

Aside from extending the life of its funds, the SSS said its reform programs also allowed it to post a profit last year, marking a turnaround. It reported that its revenues hit P2.6 billion in 2004, rebounding from a net loss of P2.9 billion in 2003.

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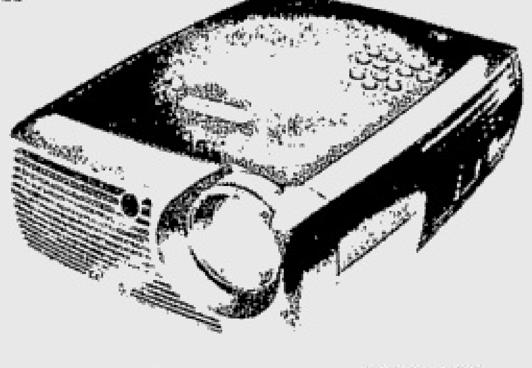

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BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Leverage on your company's information assets

BUSINESS Intelligence (BI) is a broad category of applications and technologies that help organizations consolidate information from disparate source systems for the analysis, consumption and dissemination of information to business users, customers and strategic stakeholders.

BI gives its users one version of the truth, helping users to arrive at decisions by telling users what happened, why it happened, what may happen, and everything they need to know about how their company is performing.

Simply put—without BI, you're left with pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that don't seem to fit. With BI each piece is readily linked to another, eventually revealing the whole business picture.

How it all began

Business intelligence came about from management's need to make sense of the data so abundantly and regularly produced by its company's transactional system. Managers found themselves increasingly relying on various (and oftentimes conflicting) spreadsheet data and a great deal of guesswork when making decisions. Too much time was spent collating data, and gave managers little room to make sense of it all.

In the Philippines, we've been working on BI projects for over six years now. Most of our initial clients were subsidiaries of multinational companies that needed to consolidate its data for their mother companies and were mandated by their head offices to acquire BI applications. Eventually, locally owned enterprises followed suit, once their applications were in place.

We are now seeing a shift from BI as a reporting tool, to an increased market awareness of the other benefits and capabilities that BI can offer. Beyond data consolidation and summary reports, BI can help you analyze your information from different dimensions.

Valuing data

As of the moment, there are ongoing studies that are finding out the exact price of information. Until then, we will not see our data being assigned its own depreciation schedule and finding its place in our companies' financial statements.

However, it is important that we begin to treat our data as an important resource. A resource that carries costs that are associated with its storage, retrieval, accuracy and relevance, as well as a resource that provides us with numerous business benefits—all of which should remain, for now, invaluable.

Business intelligence applications work best for sectors that are highly competitive. In the Philippines, telecommunications companies use BI to analyze call volumes, equipment inventory and sales, and profitability. With BI, telecommunications companies are able to create targeted marketing campaigns for its users. With the use of customer profiling and analytical tools, their marketing group can determine buying habits of a particular market segment, the effectiveness of their past marketing campaigns, and determine the factors that have led to customer churn.

Larger banking institutions have long used BI in identifying their local customers and analyzing current and future customer profitability. With BI, customer attrition can be prevented by spotting customers that are likely to change banking affiliation. Business intelligence has also helped banks analyze mergers and acquisitions, credit risk and bank performance and provide insights on channel preferences on how to improve its relationship banking.

We likewise see the growing need for BI in the retail industry, as more businesses study customers' buying patterns according to various segments. Business intelligence helps retail and marketing services-oriented firms to track and analyze the success of its sales promotions, as well as predict which customers will respond to a particular marketing campaign.

Hesitation

Still we find that most companies, specifically in the SME space, still hesitate to accept BI as a business strategy. This is mainly due to the investment costs associated with the BI tools and hardware, as well as time and resource that is required for an implementation. Note that this group does not include firms that do not have stable operational systems to begin with...

... And there are companies that go into BI for BI's sake—be it for the sake of bragging rights or for the promise and dazzle of BI's roster of sophisticated tools. In such instances, these projects are doomed to fail. The need for BI solution is driven by the business users that have seen the necessity of gaining access to more comprehensive information. No matter how right the solution, the BI application is useless if this is not aligned with the company's overall strategies.

We've all heard that knowledge is power. In BI this obviously holds true. Assuming that the data stored in the data warehouse is complete, accurate and relevant, the most successful BI implementations are those that allow the business to share its information.

In the midst of stiffer competition, increasing operational costs and the ever-changing business climate, the long-term viability of a business is determined by how effectively the company can collect, extract and analyze its data. With business intelligence, leveraging on your data assets is no longer an option. It becomes the venture of the wise. *Eugene Bagtas, Soluziona Philippines' Business Intelligence practice leader*

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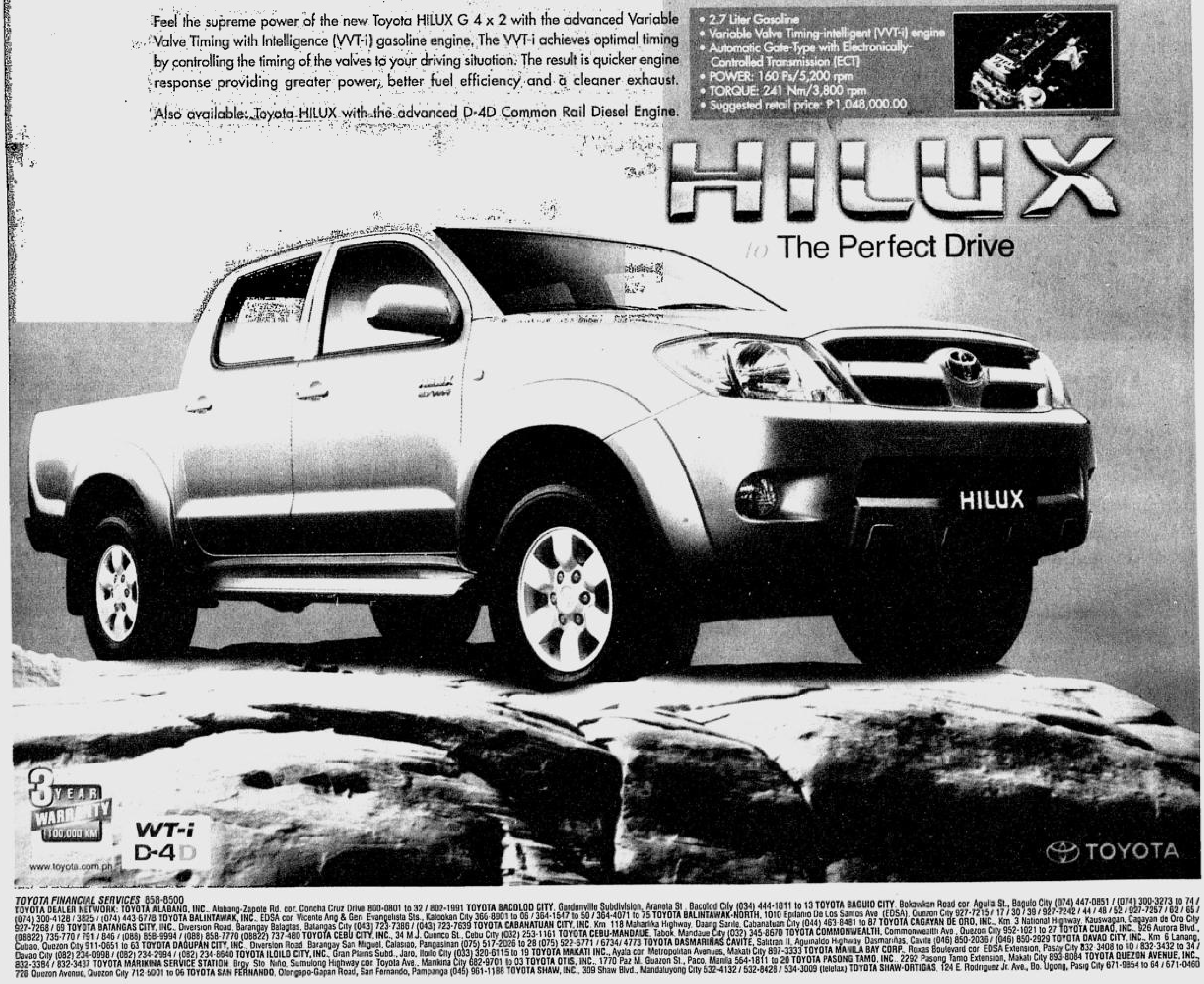

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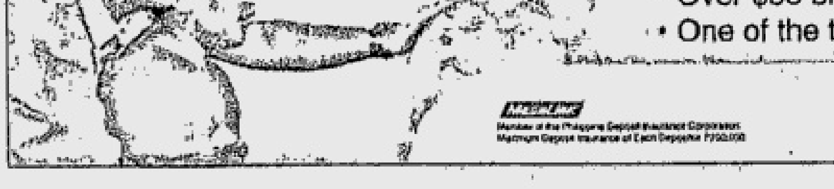

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This exec puts hairdressers on top of her to-do list

HAIRDRESSERS have an ally in Wella Philippines managing director Rebecca R. Lopez who puts training stylists on the top of her to-do list.

She's had her hair cut, colored and styled in more ways than she can remember. But for Lopez, it's just another day in the office.

"Every now and then, our technicians will need a model for testing new products and techniques," explains Lopez, who really much prefers the practicality of wash-and-wear hair.

Lopez's attention was on the recently concluded Philippine Fashion Week. This 10-day grand gathering of top local fashion designers and their current creations was presented by Joey and Audie Espino of Runway. Wella's history with the annual extravaganza evolved from exhibitor three years ago, to its more significant role as partner. During a Gala Night dubbed "Wella Unveils the Young Avant-Garde Collection" on April 4 at the NBC Tent, Wella Philippines presented Trend Vision 2005, a showcase of the forecasted hairstyle and color concepts as interpreted by young hairstylists.

"Personally, I see hair and fashion as complementary, one cannot do without the other," says Lopez. "That's why we decided to become a major part of Philippine Fashion Week. We'd like to create in the minds of consumers the perception that Wella is in fashion, that it is more than a maker of haircare products, it's a trendsetter. That's why we thought Philippine Fashion Week was a good venue to create this awareness."

WELLA Philippines managing director Rebecca Lopez sees the Philippine Fashion Week as the perfect platform to prove to its target publics that the company is a fashion trendsetter and not just a maker of haircare products.

SALON Owners and Hairdressers Association (Soha) members (from left) Linda Francisco of Piandre, David Charlton of David's Salon, Jesi Mendez of Jesi Mendez Salons, Agnes Mantolino of Regine's and Pin Antonio of Salon de Manila.

It's the service

Lopez's own history with the 125-year-old German hair product company is just as eventful. Then on leave from her job with a production outfit that produced educational materials, she agreed to pitch in for a friend's design group of which the Wella agent at that time was a client. "One day, the client invites me to their office and asks if I want to join Wella," she recounts. "I said, Sure, but my background is in broadcasting, not marketing. They said, You'll learn! It's easy. So I said, Okay, and I stayed and stayed and stayed."

That was 26 years ago. Though Lopez started out as a brand manager handling consumer products, her strength and passion lay in salons. "I like working in the salon division, it's a much more personal kind of business than retail," says Lopez who took over heading Wella's salon division from her departing boss in 1981 and held on to the post until last year. "In salons, it is the service that you give that is important. With today's number of multinational brands, quality is no longer a question because all companies follow strict quality control standards. At the end of the day, it's the kind of service that you give your customer that plays an important role."

Training a priority

Training, therefore, is a priority of the company which maintains a studio where basic and advanced courses are conducted year-round by expert technicians who themselves undergo regular refresher courses. Training seminars (which combine theory, live demos and a hands-on workshop using Wella products) range from the usual cut and coloring techniques to the rudiments of salon management, and special courses to prepare a stylist for an event like the Trend Vision Awards. Whenever salons cannot send their staff to the studio, Wella will field its technicians to wherever it's convenient for the stylists.

"Hairdressers are at the center of our business. Everything we do is for the hairdresser," declares Lopez. And for good reason: while the market continues to seduce shoppers with more affordable and easy-to-apply at-home products, Wella's managing director is quick to point out that nothing compares to the work of a well-trained stylist. "It is our belief that if you have a good training foundation, which includes the proper use of our products, then you can expect good results," she says.

Lopez's passion for the people in the salon industry, in fact, is so fierce, she envisions herself involved "in a project that has something to do with hairdressing," should she decide to leave Wella. "It's a very good career option," she assures. "And if you're really talented, you can go places. Filipino hairdressers are very creative. But there is a strong need for continued education, training and updating."

Content where she is

Otherwise, Lopez is perfectly content where she is, despite the constant meetings, client calls, and habit of having to bring home paperwork. "The joke is if you work under me and are single, you'll never get married," laughs Lopez, the wife of a freelance photographer and audio-visual producer and mother to a 28-year-old girl. "But Wella is a good company to work for. It's always been employee-oriented in the sense that it gives you responsibility and authority. And it's in their culture that employees last long with them. I've read about employees from Wella Germany and other countries who retire after 40 years! We don't have much frills, but the employees are well taken care of."

Besides, leaving is the last thing on the mind of the managing director who is in the midst of steering the company through a series of five-year goals. "Definitely, we want significant growth and market penetration," she says. "We want more salons to use more Wella products all the time."

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Augusto L. De Leon

ANY form of population management, if successfully adopted today, will still impact on the serious unemployment problems 20 years from now.

In the meantime, employment opportunities, domestic and foreign, are not only limited, but require higher skills and educational requirements for entry.

Those left behind are the unskilled, less educated and less capable to complete in the job market. Remaining jobless for as long as five years, they survive by sharing from the income of employed relatives, thereby reducing the effective income of the employed.

Employers, on the other hand, while making economic decisions, forego hiring for marginal work. Small and medium enterprises, uncertain about the future of their venture, avoid the risk of hiring because of the long-term cost.

While our labor and social legislation are at par with those of developed and fast-growing economies, the reality is that these laws have increased the threshold level of employment. Just like how lower prices of goods increase demand, lower cost of labor will increase the demand for employment.

As an interim measure, a law that will legally allow the unemployed to voluntarily waive their rights to the benefits afforded by existing legislation for a fixed period of, say, five years, can increase the demand for labor and benefit the unemployed as they gain some skills and experience working in an organized environment where work and personal discipline can be imbibed.

The economy will gain from the incremental wealth creation at the same time, easing the economic and social burden of unemployment.

One could suggest possible employment incentives to those with "certificates of waiver," such as, (1) Minimum wage; (2) Mandatory regularization after six months; (3) 8-hour labor law; (4) Night-time pay differential; and (5) Exemption from the coverage of existing benefits derived from collective bargaining contracts.

Salaries, wages, and terms of employment will be covered by what is agreed upon between the employee and employer, provided there are no breaches in the human rights of the employee. Likewise, enrollment to SSS membership cannot be waived.

As this will be on a voluntary basis, those who wish to avail of the incentive law will have to secure a "certificate of exemption" from the Department of Labor and Employment.

The exemption will be valid for only give years from date of issuance. Employers will have the option to terminate upon the expiration of the certificate or hire them as new employees with complete rights to avail of all the benefits and rights provided for by existing labor and social legislation in force at the time of regular employment.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is Principal Consultant of De Leon Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

EWB's annual report wins Gold Quill Award

EAST West Bank's passion for breaking barriers to bring only the best to the banking public was recently lauded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) as the Bank's 2003 Annual Report won recognition through a Gold Quill Award of Merit. The annual report forms part of East West Bank's myriad efforts to go beyond the traditional.

This year's winning entry for the Gold Quill Award, East West Bank's 2003 Annual Report highlighted the bank's unprecedented expansion and growth. Aptly entitled "Expand the Box," it showcased the many facets of technological innovation and product development that the Bank implemented during the year in a highly unconventional fashion.

Among others, the report included the various outreach programs spearheaded by East West Bank employees through its Employee Relations Council (ERC) in service of the community as a good corporate citizen.

Like most banking institutions, East West Bank's previous annual reports looked traditional—formal and seemingly uninspired. That all changed in 2001 when the Bank adopted a new logo and corporate thrust.

US stock slump sends shivers through luxury sector

WASHINGTON—High oil prices hold few concerns for the average luxury goods consumer, but the recent US stock market downturn may have caused some wealthy individuals to sit up, take notice and put their wallets back in their pockets, analysts say.

Weak US retail sales have shown how steep prices at the gas pump have bitten into the ordinary consumer's spending power, but until now sales of luxury goods have continued apace—as exemplified by the solid profits at upscale retailer Neiman Marcus Group and smart accessories maker Coach Inc.

Industry watchers suggest, however, that the recent downturn in stock markets may remind investors and some luxury goods consumers of the 2002 recession.

So far this year, the Dow Industrial Average has fallen 6 percent, the Standard & Poor's 500 index is down nearly 5 percent and the Nasdaq composite is down more than 11 percent. *Reuters*

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Executives on the fast track are typically very busy, and travel substantially. But they do have "pockets" of time - departure lounges in airports, waiting for the next client meeting, stuck in hotel rooms, long train rides, flights etc. Universitas 21 Global allows them the opportunity to make effective use of this by upgrading their executive skills.

> *Executives on the fast track are typically very busy, and travel substantially. But they do have "pockets" of time...*

The MBA Program has a total of 18 subjects - 10 core subjects, 7 electives, and a research project. Each subject runs for 12 weeks and takes about 8 to 12 hours a week of both online and offline work. Certificate programs are also available. These consist of 4 subjects, comprising one specialization (e.g. Finance; Marketing etc.).

Students taking 2 subjects at a time without interruption can complete the MBA in 2.5 years. Normally though, it takes 3 to 5 years for the busy executive to finish the program.

This online program is not lacking in interaction in any way. "Online learning refers to the use of the Internet for the delivery of subject materials and to facilitate instructor-student and student-student interaction. Students use a computer and, via the Internet, access online classrooms which provide content and communications links including message boards, threaded discussions and chat rooms," says Dr. Mukesh Aghi, CEO of Universitas 21 Global. An advantage of an online program, unnoticeably, is the concept of equal air-time. Unlike in a traditional classroom where typically 20% of the students dominate the discussion, all students are able to get equal air-time online, contribute equally to the discussion, and get feedback from fellow classmates and faculty, on their inputs.

Aside from this, students immediately have a network of executives as classmates, who are typically from different countries, regions and cultures. Currently, there are more than 600 students from 37 countries registered with Universitas 21 Global. In contrast, most classroom-based programs tend to lack diversity in their class make-up e.g. 95% students from North America.

Online learning makes it possible to tap the best faculty from around the world, and is not constrained by the faculty in only one location.

Very prominent companies, internationally and in the Philippines, are already sponsoring their key executives in Universitas 21 Global. In the Philippines, the leading utilities company has enrolled their Senior Asst. Vice Presidents, who are already Executive MBA Graduates, for Universitas 21 Global specialized subjects.

The total cost of US$ 11,650 for the full MBA, is tremendous value for money, when compared to similarly reputable and globally recognized graduate schools. Furthermore, there are no opportunity costs for career and current earnings as you can continue to be employed throughout the course.

Information and counseling sessions are being conducted Tuesday evenings 6:30pm to 8:00pm in Makati.

Call (02) 887-7750, 886-6438 or email genashtim@zpdee.net, to register.

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Angelita Atanacio, Philippines
Sr. Asst. Vice President, Meralco

"I know I will get world class education that will help me build my career.... ...what I learn today, I will definitely use tomorrow..."
Candace Frazier-Klein, Canada
Account Manager

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Family summer getaways north of Metro Manila

THE SCORCHING heat around this time of the year has always been a sure sign that summer is coming. This is the season when families begin to plan their annual summer getaways. And under the dazzling tropical sun, Pinoys are at their happiest, explaining why the leisure industry and summer hotspots thrive outside the metro.

Traffic and heat are also the main reason for families and barkadas to head off to the nearest holiday destinations for several days or even just a weekend of de-stressing and recharging their harassed bodies. Road trips like these also give people a chance to visit their relatives and friends in the province for some genuine bonding time.

These days, improved roads to the north offer the most convenient alternative getaway from Metro Manila. Subic, Bataan, and Pampanga-over recent years, these destinations have slowly emerged as popular summer spots located north of Metro Manila. They have become well-known for providing wholesome family activities such as duty free shopping and swimming with the false killer whales in Subic, snorkeling and encounters with the pawikan in the pristine beaches of Bataan, playing a round of golf in Clark, and merrymaking during fiestas in Pampanga coupled with indulgence in such culinary delights of the local culture as halo-halo and sisig.

Among these destinations, Subic remains top of mind. With improved accessibility to the place due to the rehabilitation of the North Luzon Expressway, trips now take less than two hours from Metro Manila.

Subic entitles visitors to an unlimited spree of swimming, island hopping, diving, and sailing at any of Subic Bay's myriad coves. Mountaineers and nature lovers will also adore the area's towering and lush mountains for their challenging nature treks and refreshing views. For history buffs, there are countless places to make sentimental trips to. And for those who feel that no trip is complete without good food, there are the frozen steaks and imported desserts at the Duty Free shops, the sweet mangoes and cashew nuts of Zambales, and the multitude of restaurants offering Japanese, Filipino, American, and Spanish fare along the boardwalk area.

More exciting pursuits can also be found within and around Subic-the jungle trek in SBMA, amazing animal shows at Ocean Adventure, skydiving, parasailing, and island hopping. Indeed, the options are endless in this one-stop destination that combines world-class amenities with endearing local hospitality.

Leisure seekers naturally look forward to continuously enjoying all these activities by having their own vacation home in an area very near Subic, where they can truly relish the best of both worlds: an established leisure hub and a natural, idyllic haven.

Ayala Land Inc (ALI), the country's leading real-estate developer, has seized the tremendous synergy it can create with Subic's leisure amenities by embarking on its first leisure venture-a high-end seaside residential resort community tucked in the neighboring town of Morong, Bataan. This leisure development spans over 320 hectares of a charming property, nestled within a 3.5-km coastline, and framed by the majestic mountain ranges of Zambales and Bataan.

The lovely combination of mountain and sea environs will be the perfect backyard for seaside lots, elegant sea-view villas, and other leisure and recreational facilities, which are foreseen to establish Ayala's project as an important weekend destination north of Manila.

ALI has teamed up with Sudeco, a private real-estate holding company established in 1998, for the development. Currently, the company is fast-tracking the development of the project's Beach and Nature Club, which will become the center of a thriving community in the coming months. Future homeowners are guaranteed to enjoy these leisure and recreation facilities, not just on their annual summer vacation, but the whole year round. Modern conveniences will never be missed because of neighboring Subic's well-developed infrastructure, which complement Bataan's booming tourist spots.

The leisurely, natural pleasures of the area is seen to lure active families and retirees alike who are seeking that perfect seaside home where vacations are a daily offering amid calm vistas. City-based folk, meanwhile, can simply build a charming rest house they can go home to on weekends-that is, if they can muster enough strength to leave their paradise and go back to the chaotic metro. Once unveiled, the new Ayala project near Subic is sure to set the new trend in leisure destinations north of Metro Manila.

For information on Ayala Land projects, call 728-7000, e-mail ayalasales@ayalaland.com.ph or log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph.

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IAJE, PTA INK MOA

In-A-Jiffy Enterprises (IAJE) and the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) recently entered into an agreement to support PTA's Best of the Philippines tourism initiatives. The agreement is in line with IAJE's ongoing tourism advocacy campaign 'Sing Through The Philippines'. In-A-Jiffy Enterprises is the exclusive distributor of WOW! Magic Sing Premium, the number one selling videoke microphone in the country, and the only microphone that promotes Philippine tourism. Shown, from left, are Andres Sanchez Jr, president, IAJE; Cris Llamo, COO, IAJE; Robert Dean Barbers, GM/CEO, PTA; Olive Sanchez, GM, IAJE, and Dr. Ronald Imperio, comptroller, Duty Free Philippines.

Happy Easter

EASTER AT LINDEN SUITES

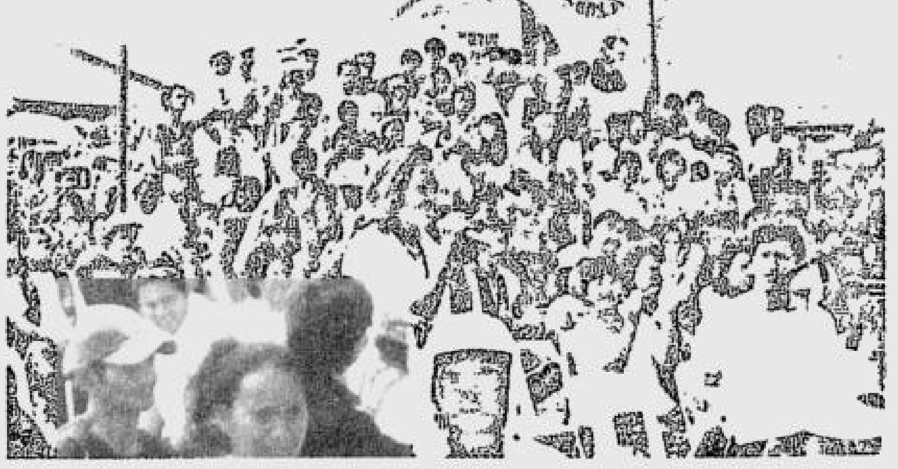
The Linden Suites capped its Holy Week Package with a highly successful Easter Party. Shown are kids eagerly volunteering to assist Magician Wan Lu in performing magic tricks. Guests can look forward to more exciting events and activities during holidays and special occasions like Halloween and Christmas. The Linden Suites is located at 37 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. For inquiries and reservations, call 638-7878 or log on to www.lindensuites.com.

JEROME ABALOS SIGNS FOR NINE PLANETS SHIRT

Jerome Abalos of 'Larawang Kupas' fame is back, via his new album titled 'Muli'. CPS Trading, the sole distributor of Nine Planets Shirt, hired the services of Jerome Abalos to be its official endorser to promote the brand for his promo tour nationwide. Shown, from left, are Richard Hinola (advertising and promotions consultant of CPS Trading), Alex Legaspi (VP, Nine Planets Shirt), Jerome Abalos, Angel Ligaya (operations manager, Nine Planets Shirt), and Randy Villamor (marketing head, Nine Planets Shirt).

AGATEP HARVESTS MORE ANVIL AWARDS

Agatep Associates Inc (AAI) president Charlie Agatep (seated left) and general manager Audrey General (2nd row, left) led the celebration for the agency's winning two more Anvils in the 2005 Anvil Awards given by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP). AAI won for its client National Geographic Channel an award of excellence, PR tools category for 'Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed' photo exhibit. AAI also won an award of merit in crisis management for United Coconut Planters Bank's (UCPB) 'Operation Turnaround'. The Anvil Awards competition is considered the 'Oscar' of the PR industry and is held annually by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines to recognize exceptional PR programs implemented in the previous year. AAI has the most number of Anvil Awards among PR companies in the country, including three Grand Anvils-the highest of all Anvil awards.



SMART REVISITS GAWAD KALINGA AT BASECO

After launching an initiative with Gawad Kalinga to help construct 100 houses for fire victims at the Baseco Compound in Tondo, senior executives of Smart Communications Inc recently revisited the community. Residents of the community, called Smart Amazing Village, have been provided not only with decent housing but with job opportunities and livelihood programs as well, under GK's holistic approach to human development. Shown are Smart beneficiaries during the visit.

DHL draws 'Ship Once, Win Twice' winners

DHL, THE world's leading express and logistics company, has announced Medical Trends & Technologist Inc marketing manager Rex Mendoza as the winner of its "Ship Once, Win Twice" promotion where he received a 42-inch Plasma TV during the grand raffle draw. Raymund Uy, the DHL courier assigned to Medical Trends, also won a Flat TV.

During the entire promo, DHL Express Philippines also gave away 34,000 free movie passes, over 1,000 pieces of various shopping gift certificates, and five overnight stays for two in a hotel of their choice within the Philippines.

"Our company is happy with the way DHL handles our various delivery needs. We receive our documents and laboratory kits on time and in good condition. DHL's services help make things easier for us to conduct our business, not only with our local customers but also with our global partners," said promo grand winner, Rex Mendoza.

"It's our way of thanking our patrons for supporting DHL for over 30 years in the Philippines. DHL continuously strives to provide the best express service to Filipinos, always making sure their shipments are delivered on time, to any destination, with our network spanning 220 countries worldwide," DHL Express Philippines country manager Lawrence Llamzon said.

RAYMUND Uy, the DHL courier assigned to Medical Trends, won a flat TV. With him is DHL Express Philippines Inc country manager Larry Llamzon.

Bits Clips

ISO 17799/BS 7799 seminars

FOLLOWING on from the success of their ISO 17799 awareness seminars in March, Imaginet and Miel e-Security are running two half-day seminars at the Asian Institute of Management on April 27 to create full awareness of the ISO 17799 standard for Information Security. Imaginet will also be running a 2-day BS7799 Implementer/ Auditor Training Course on April 28 and 29 for organizations who are or have implemented BS7799 to assist in training business unit heads, new staff or auditors in managing and maintaining the ISMS and associated processes. Imaginet is a leading systems integrator in the Philippines and Miel e-Security is India's leading IT security organization providing ISO and IT security services to over 500 leading corporations and organizations. Call Abi or Lolita at 895-9755 or 895-9745 for registration and details.

Business power via financial analysis

CRUCIAL business decisions are the keys to unlock the power within an organization. Entrepreneurs and professional managers understand that the foundation lies in the proper and correct interpretation of financial reports. Gain a full understanding of how financial reports may be used for critical short-term and long-term planning and decision-making. Get hands-on experience in analyzing and interpreting actual financial data. Attend this seminar from April 26 to 28 at the Richmonde Hotel. For inquiries, call 0918-91578973 and look for Lenien; 0917-8197073 and look for Rose, or e-mail skillsoncall@yahoo.com. Managerial action is needed now. Unleash that power and be ahead of the pack.

NREA meet April 26

CHAIR Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and president Celso G. delos Angeles Jr of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp (NHMFC) topbill, as resource speakers, the monthly business forum of the National Real Estate Association (NREA) on April 26, 1 to 5 p.m. at Gabaldon Hall, Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan. Non-members of NREA, including representatives of housing NGOs, can attend the business meeting upon prior coordination with the NREA secretariat at 912-3492 or 913-4463.

Cosmo goes to work

JOIN the first leg of "Cosmo Goes to Work" on April 30 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Ayala corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati and let image consultant Olen Juarez-Lim, fashion editor Donna Cuna-Pita, and beauty editor Ianne Evangelista show you how to develop your potential. To join, e-mail your name, age, occupation, office address, home and office landline numbers, cell numbers to cosmopromos@summitmedia.com.ph and put "Cosmo Goes to Work" as the subject, or fill out the web form at www.femalenetwork.com/cgtw. Attendees will be notified via e-mail no later than April 27. This event is open to women 18 to 35 years of age.

St. Gregory the Great alumni reunion

ALUMNI of St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Tabaco City, Albay will have its grand reunion at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Fiat House, Barangay Cabinitan, and Amenia Resort, Virac, Catanduanes from April 28 to 30. Assembly and overnight stay will be at SGGS at 6 p.m. on April 27, while departure for Virac will be at 5 a.m. on April 28. For details, call Fr. Santi Fernandez at 872-4392 or lawyer Nitoy Arcilla (Manila); Fr. Johnny Lizaso and Ursus de Quiros (Catanduanes); Fr. Dave Ramoso at (052)484-6086 and Bert David (Albay); and Msgr. Cris Bernarte Jr. at (052)820-4603.

Medical transcription fever spreads to the Visayas

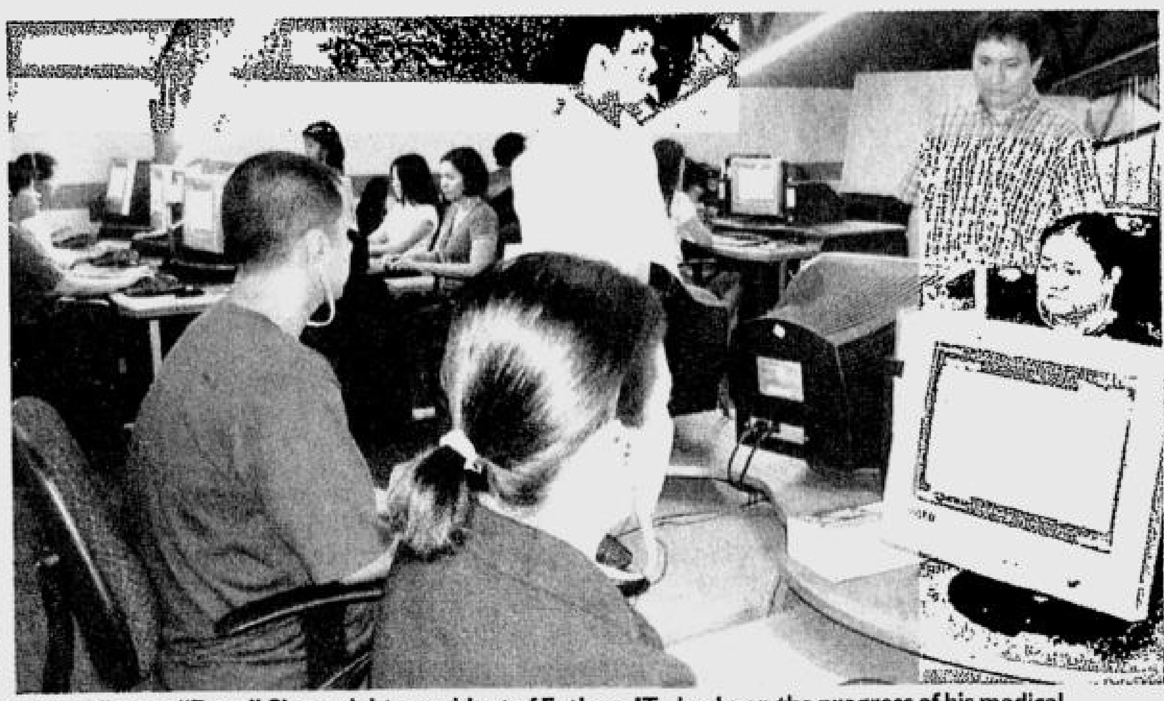
By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Due to the prospect of immediate employment in the United States after graduation, Jessica (not her real name) enrolled in Physical Therapy.

Four years after passing the board exams, she was still in the Philippines and unemployed. Needing to earn her keep, Jessica found herself working in menial jobs.

Jessica's story is but one of the many involving underemployed professionals in Dumaguete, whose four universities produce some 7,000 graduates each year.

With not enough jobs in the city, Dumaguete's graduates have to grab at any opportunity that comes along, even if it has nothing to do with what they studied in college.


Victor Vicente "Dean" Sinco, right, president of Entheos IT, checks on the progress of his medical transcriptionists at his 60-seat facility inside their Foundation University campus in Dumaguete City.

PHOTOS BY ALEX PAL/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

Then one day, Jessica saw an advertisement in a Dumaguete newspaper for a local medical transcription company, which was looking for graduates in nursing, physical therapy, medical technology and the allied sciences.

She got the job and became part of the pioneering batch of 16 medical transcribers of Entheos IT, run by Victor Vicente Sinco.

Entheos IT, an offshoot of Sinco's other business ventures in Hawaii where he owned an architectural firm, was incorporated late last year, in response to the opening up of Negros Oriental's leaders to Information and Communication Technology businesses.

Offering a talented human resources base, stable power supply, peaceful environment and a hi-speed fiber-optic facility that is matched only by the technology found in Germany, Negros Oriental hopes to attract more environment-friendly ICT businesses this year, says Gov. George Arnaiz.

Medical transcription is the process of converting to written form the dictations of doctors and other healthcare professionals regarding patient diagnosis, care, and therapeutic procedures, among others.

Sinco plans to grow Entheos IT into a 150-seat company working on double shifts. He says that the new US federal law requiring documentation of patient care to facilitate healthcare services has made medical transcription a promising business opportunity.

"However, our growth can only be possible through quality work," Sinco added.

With about 60 medical transcription companies operating locally, the country is fast becoming a favorite source of medical transcriptionists by US companies, whose domestic pool of medical transcriptionists is getting smaller.

Philippine medical transcription companies charge from $0.05 to $0.12 per line.

"One thing good about Dumaguete is its good human resources, where up to 50 percent of the applicants pass the tests, in contrast to the passing average in Manila which could be only three percent," Sinco says.

Applicants are expected to have an operational mastery of English, in addition to familiarity with medical terminology.

With salaries starting from P8,000 to P10,000 per month, workers can expect to receive as much as P50,000 to P80,000 monthly as they become more experienced and move up the ladder to become operations managers.

"We give our workers a chance to work and play—and even die (hopefully happily)—in this place where they grew up," Sinco adds.

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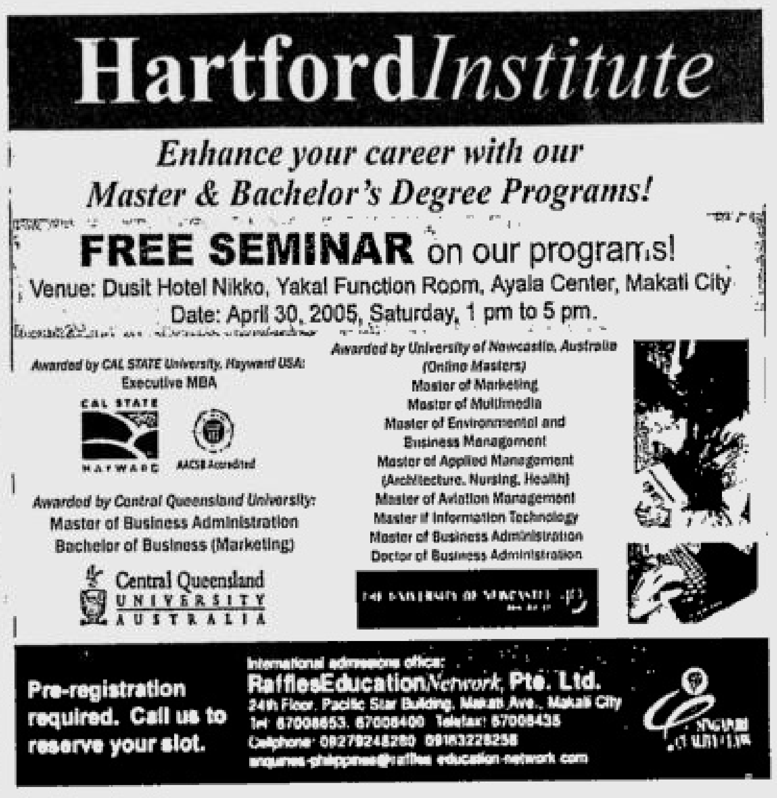
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S - pecial Plates Project
E - nforcement of the MV Registration System
D - river's Training/Seminar of the P.S.S.T. - Para Sa Super Tsuper Project

T - echnology enhancement projects
O - rganizational development and human resource development

D - eveloping Road Safety Advocates and Implementing Other Road Safety Programs
R - evenue Enhancement Measures
I - ntegrity development programs
V - anity Plates Project
E - nvironmentally sustainable transport projects thru MVIS/PETC

From the Officers and Staff of
GJB ENTERPRISES, INC.

Materials catalog seen helping boost exports

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FINDING a niche in the vast global market has been touted as the sure-fire way to secure a foothold in the export business and a number of small business owners have made headway by doing so.

One way to develop a niche is to offer products that are unique, such as those that are made with raw materials found only in limited areas in the world or, better, only in the country.

Now, the government wants to give exporters another boost by enabling them to maximize the use of indigenous raw materials with the publication of a catalog of these materials.

Meynardo Orbeta, director of the Department of Trade and Indutry's Bureau of Domestic Trade, says manufacturers could learn about the potentials of using local raw materials in wearables, gifts and holiday décor, leathergoods, footwear, costume and fine jewelry, hats and headgear and others.

"Manufacturers can learn where they can buy these raw materials and how to use them," Orbeta says. "The catalog includes information on how to contact selected suppliers."

He explains that the catalog provides technical information on 29 raw materials including bamboo, bast fiber, climbing ferns, reeds, herbs, erect palms, climbing palms (rattan), sedges and rushes, screwpines (pandan), woody vines, leather, seashells and wooden beads.

The document also provides the names that the raw materials are known in various Philippine languages, their biological structures, economic uses and the places where they are found abundantly.

Available for P300 a copy at the DTI headquarters, the catalog is a collaboration among Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines, Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Philippine Trade Training Center, Cottage Industry Technology Center, the DTI's provincial offices, and the Department of Science and Technology's Forest Product and Research and Development Institute.

RATTAN is just one of the raw materials featured in the publication

To give you an idea of how local exporters are faring, the DTI's Citem reported that the biannual Manila FAME—held every April and October—posted a total of $82.7 million in receipts in October 2004.

Figures for the latest Manila FAME, held last week at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, are not yet available.

The country's biggest trade show on home furnishings, gifts and holiday décor as well as fashion accessories, Manila FAME is one of the government's ways of helping local firms—especially small and medium enterprises—to expand their markets and establish relationships with other local firms as well as foreign companies.

In a related development, the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP) last week called on the government to make clearer rules on logging and act on "the worsening shortage" of wood and timber products that threaten their businesses.

CFIP chair Nick de Lange said the shortage was taking its toll on the nation's 15,000 furniture-makers who serve both the domestic and international markets.

De Lange said the situation began when the government "stopped the wood supply chain" first with the prolonged total log ban, which turned to worse when the scarcity of wood continued despite the ban's lifting.

He said that prices of wood supplies were rising and that the furniture firms' own inventories were dwindling fast. "The industry has begun losing market opportunities."

CFIP estimates the total annual wood requirements of the local furniture industry at 364,000 cubic meters.

De Lange said wood furniture made up half of total furniture exports, with the other half composed of those made of secondary forest products like buri, rattan and bamboo as well as plastic metal and iron.

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50-year-old retail venture becomes 'true to nature'

ONCE in while, a company with a vision for a better world stands out from the rest of the pack. No, it's not just about the flashy images or the almost manic obsession to outdo the competition. Rather, it's about the sincerity that comes with exercising corporate social responsibility. The kind that moves a company's management to action that will work for the greater good.

This is the kind of spirit that sparked the marketing and communications team of Cinderella to start the "b tru 2 ur nature" campaign.

Known for being a pioneer in the Philippine retail industry, Cinderella has withstood the test of time in the ever-changing world of fashion. The latest trends, the hottest colors, the best cuts, and all the other elements of style—these are trademarks that made it last for more than 50 years in the business.

But more than these, Cinderella has always stood for values that uphold what is truly important. In this case, it's the preservation and responsible conservation of our natural resources.

While it is reflected in the visual display in the stores, in the gift bags and shopping bags, and pictorials, the highlight of the campaign is the lineup of activities that translate "b tru 2 ur nature" from a mere marketing slogan to small but real acts of environmentalism. First in the lineup was the Tree Planting Project in the EartHaven Eco-Community in San Mateo, Rizal, which is chaired by Belen King.

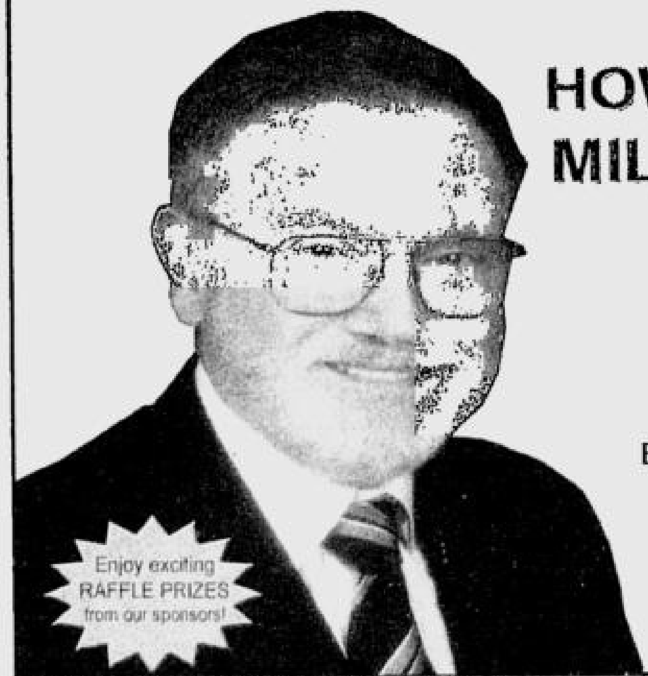
cinderella
TREE PLANTING PROJECT

CINDERELLA'S CEO Arthur Coronel does his part in the tree-planting as a show of the company's willingness to help in environmental protection projects.

The tree-planting was led by multi-awarded actress Chin Chin Gutierrez. Cinderella couldn't have picked a better choice than Chin Chin. She's vice chair of the Mother Earth Foundation, 2003 Time Magazine "Asian Heroes" awardee for the environment, and 2004 The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (TOWNS) awardee for environment advocacy.

Teenage and kiddie models also took part in the tree-planting. Their participation is symbolic of the fact that planting trees is a continuation of life and a step in helping ensure that our natural resources are kept intact for future generations.

Also present were members of Cinderella's top management: Arthur Coronel, CEO, with his wife Janet Coronel, advertising head of Cinderella Dresses Inc.; Therese Coronel-Santos, executive vice president; and the force behind the campaign Malou Coronel-De Venecia, director for marketing and communications.



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MICHAEL G. MALAGHAN
HOW TO MAKE MORE MILLIONS IN SALES!
Seminar Series
May 4, 2005 (Wednesday)
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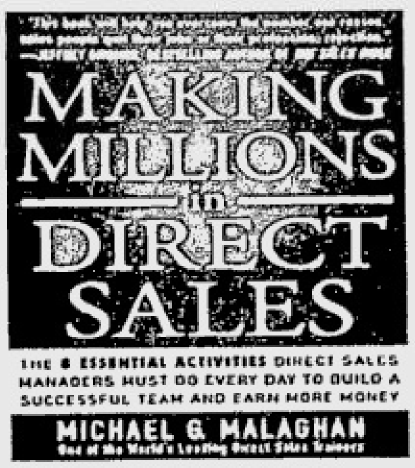

MAKING MILLIONS in DIRECT SALES
THE 8 ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES DIRECT SALES MANAGERS MUST DO EVERY DAY TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL TEAM AND EARN MORE MONEY
MICHAEL G. MALAGHAN
SOON to be released book
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9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. -SESSION 1: CREATING & LEADING A TEAM THAT MAKES MILLIONS IN SALES
Is your sales team missing opportunities? "YES," says Mike Malaghan. "And they are right under your nose!" In fact, all sales organizations have unrealized sales generating potential that once fully tapped could mean additional millions for your company. Discover why and what you as the senior leader can do about it NOW! Malaghan will share secrets that will explode your prospecting, selling, training and motivational opportunities. Learn how Mike's 8 Essential Activities can change your current results practically overnight!

2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. -SESSION 2: 60 SALES TECHNIQUES TO MAKE MORE MILLIONS
Hold on to your seats for a breathless two-hour presentation that will make you more money in 2005. Any salesperson can do better with better practices. This is a "do this" seminar. Malaghan's menu of 60 sales management practices will show you how to sell more, train better, and increase your staying power in sales. You will learn how to use the 14 key motivators, how to put excitement in your training and sales meetings, and how to build a charismatic leadership persona.

AT POPULAR PRICES! (includes handouts, certificate, one snack): A.M. SESSION : P1,500 per session (Regular), P1,750 (Patron); P.M. SESSION: P750 (Regular), P1,000 (Patron). Group discounts: 5 paid registrations plus one free registration for same session. Get a10% discount if you pay through

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Franchise Excellence Awards 2004

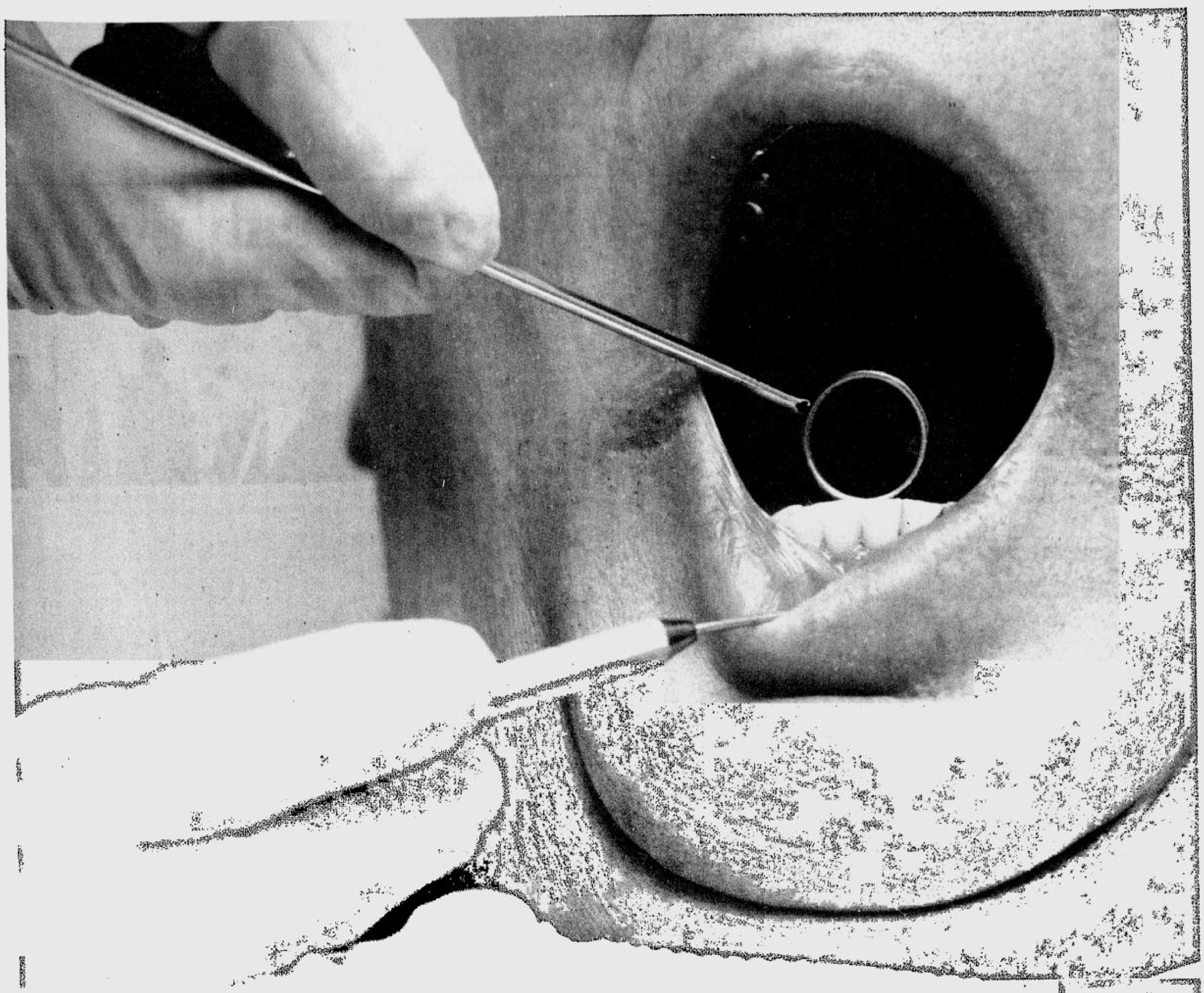
PFA president Bing Limjoco, Board of Investments governor Elmer Hernandez, Plains and Prints VP and creative head Roxanne Farillas, P&P president Erickson Farillas, Trade and Industry Secretary Juan B. Santos and PFA chair Samie Lim.

Husband-wife venture wins most promising franchise

PLAINS & Prints recently won the Most Promising Filipino Franchise of the Year award given by the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA).

With this year's theme "Galing Pinoy, Beyond Boundaries," the Franchise Excellence Awards (FEA) is given annually by the PFA in cooperation with the Department of Trade and Industry. The award-giving body salutes Plains & Prints as one of the Philippines' top retailers who have an excellent franchise program.

Plains & Prints is the result of the hard work of husband-and-wife team Erickson and Roxanne Farillas. Roxanne's passion for fabrics and design combined with Erickson's skills in finance and operations led to the opening of the first Plains & Prints outlet in Greenhills in 1994. In 2001, the first Plains & Prints franchised outlet opened in Nueva Ecija. Plains & Prints currently has 19 company-owned and 10 franchised stores selling high quality and affordable women's apparel, underwear, fragrances, and other accessories that fit the needs and lifestyle of Filipino women.



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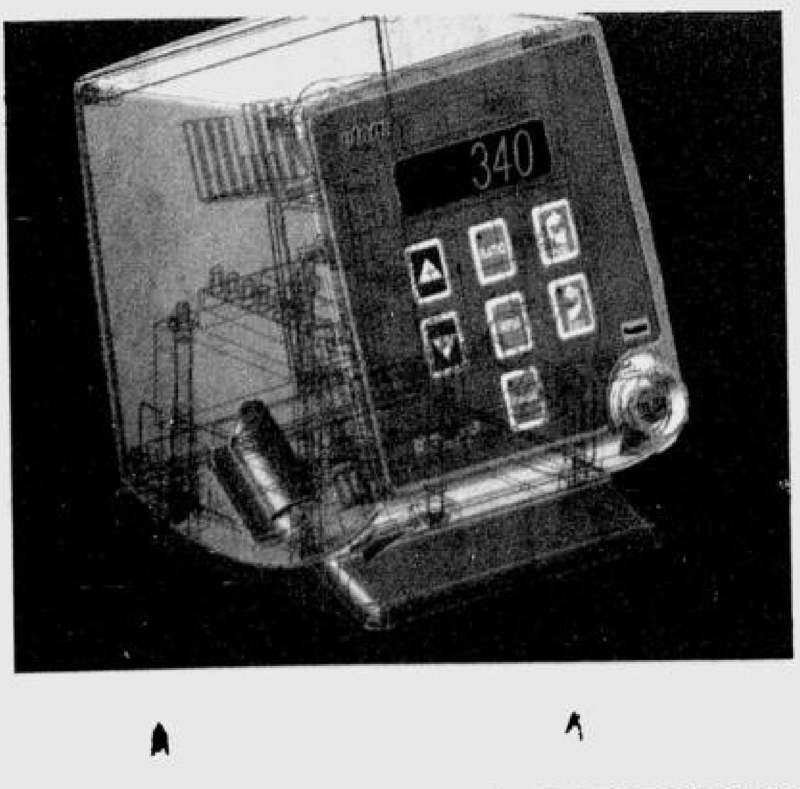

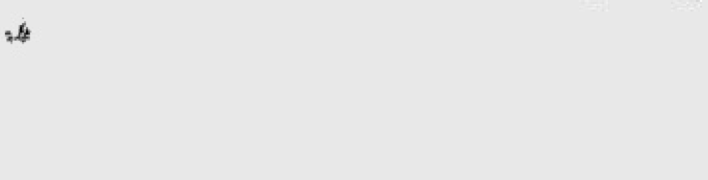

American University, AIM forge study ties

MARIA S. Floro, economics faculty, AU, Consul Joy Quintana, head of the Philippine Embassy's Cultural and Community Relations Section, and journalist Margaret Lacson of MRC3 Media

By Margaret Lacson
Contributor

WASHINGTON, DC—Linking an educational bond across the Pacific takes a lot of initiative, foresight and goodwill. After some two years in the making, two well-known institutions—one from this capital and the other in Manila—are now on their way forging toward the creation of diplomacy and critical economic thinking for the 21st century.

A partnership between American University (AU) and Asian Institute of Management (AIM) was celebrated here during the 47th year anniversary of AU's School of International Service hosted at the Embassy of the Philippines last week.

"This partnership will deepen the knowledge and understanding of students and faculty from the two institutions," said Albert del Rosario, Philippine Ambassador to the US. "(It) also represents a model for educational cooperation and exchange that enhances Philippine-American ties."

LOUIS W. Goodman, dean, School of International Service, American University, and Philippine Ambassador Albert del Rosario

Opening the celebration, dean of the School of International Service (SIS), Louis Goodman expressed high enthusiasm for future students to have an entrepreneurial and educational experience between AU and AIM. SIS has a long history of educating young men and women entering government work, the private sector, international organizations, and nongovernment organizations while AIM officials indicated that the SIS relationship would help them matriculate more students interested in careers in international organizations and NGOs, according to Goodman.

"SIS students seeking deeper knowledge of the Philippines and Southeast Asia will benefit from AIM's excellent programs, faculty and facilities," Goodman said.

SIS was founded in 1957 to provide specialized studies covering eight fields: comparative and regional studies, global environmental policy, international communication, international development, international economic policy, international peace and conflict resolution, international politics, and US foreign policy.

AIM,. founded in 1969, carries leading-edge management programs that use learning technologies responsive to diverse global markets. Their programs focus on a masters degree in business administration, management, development management and entrepreneurship, along with an executive MBA and executive education programs.

Included at the forefront of establishing the AU-AIM partnership in 2004 is Tina Maynigo, SIS' director of alumni relations. Maynigo said that SIS is prepared to offer students a worthwhile studying experience in this partnership program with AIM.

"The role of SIS now is to promote this partnership program to the students," said Maynigo, who is also the daughter of the late Philippine Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus. "We want to make it attractive not just to American students, who have never been to Asia, but also to Filipino-American or Asian-American students, who would like to spend a semester or a year studying in Asia."

David Gregory, an NBC senior White House correspondent, is the SIS alumnus honoree of this year. At the event, he said this partnership does not come at a better time, especially in light of developing global relations where participation from different cultures are key in business and political progress.

"(This partnership) is a merging of different education systems in a cross-cultural platform bringing forth new ideas and understanding," said Gregory. "It is a great window to the world to study abroad and find opportunities to develop a critical sense of thinking that covers issues on diplomacy or business."

PALAWAN
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EVAN P. Garcia, deputy chief of mission, Philippine Embassy and Filipina-American AU alumnus Doreen Mendoza, international trade specialist, US Department of Commerce

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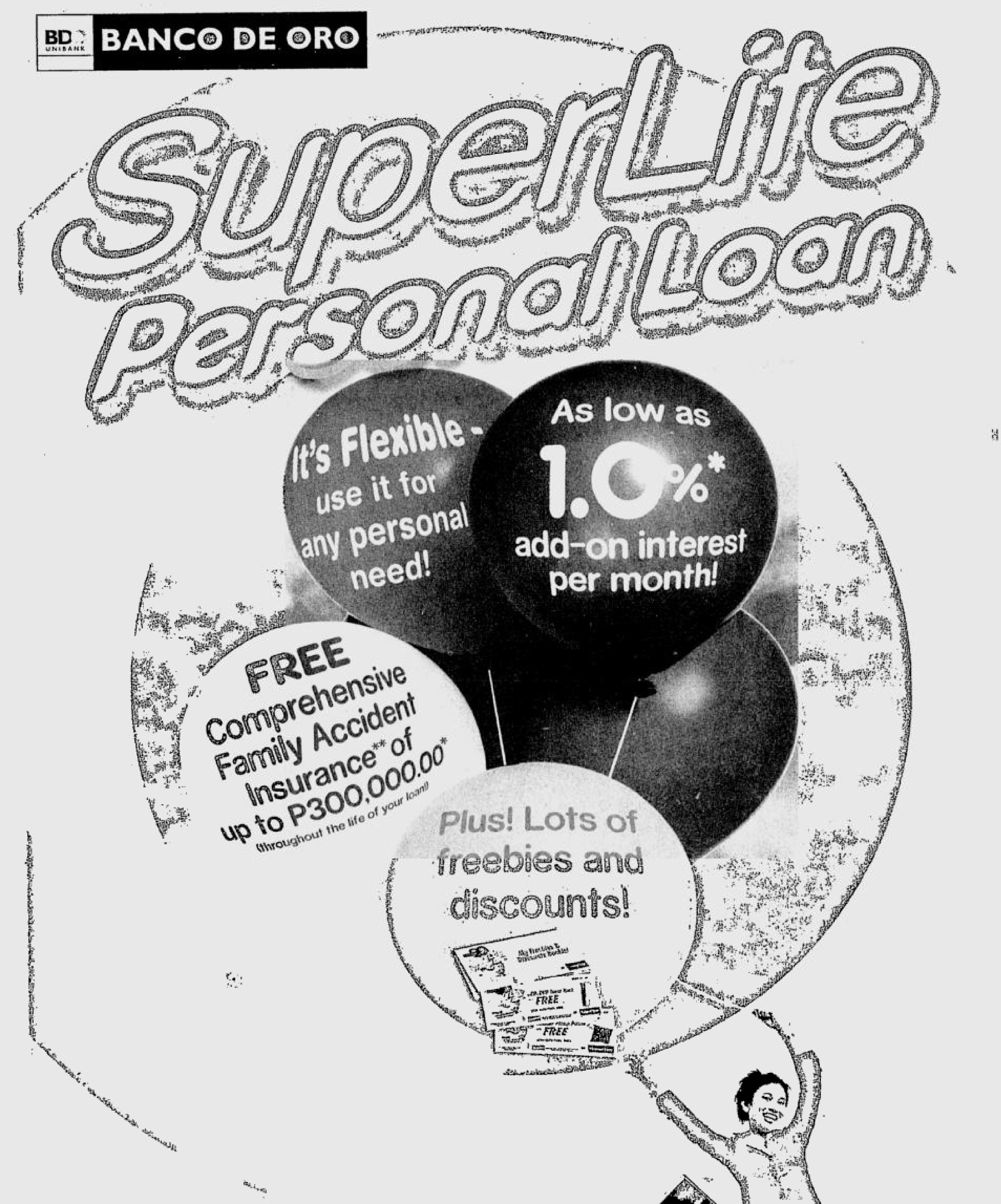
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1707 Series of 2005

Success secrets of those who made it in China

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WINNERS ALL IN CHINA: Henry Sy Sr.'s SM group, Pacita Juan's Figaro Coffee Corp. and Ben Chan's Bench.

MANY companies think of the Chinese market in the same way that an ant looks at a loaf of bread: It's so big and promising you don't even know where to start attacking.

But as foolhardy companies realized to their chagrin, one could easily bite off more than one could chew..

Intrepid Filipino companies, however, have managed over the years to make significant inroads in China.

This because they have mastered the art of first nibbling into the market, just to get a taste of its myriad flavors, before taking in mouthfuls.

One of the best examples is Liwayway Marketing Corp., manufacturer of the Oishi line of snack products.

It went into China in 1992 when it bought a state-owned company. It lost money during its first year, but hung on to the market, learning as much as it could about packaging, manufacturing and the Chinese market.

Today, Oishi posted $250 million in sales over the past two years with 11 plants in operation.

Another Philippine flag carrier is Bench Body, which from its first shop in December 2002, now has eight stores, of which three are franchised.

One of the latest additions is Figaro Coffee Corp., which opened its first coffee shop in a Shanghai office building early this year. It has plans to put up its flagship store in a prime entertainment area, also in Shanghai, right next to a Ferrari shop within the year, and find a whole new market for Philippine Barako.

Senior undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino, who handles international trade relations for the Department of Trade and Industry, said during the last "Good News Kapihan" that more Filipino companies can get a piece of the big Chinese market.

He, however, said that doing so is not for the faint of heart nor those short of finances, marketing savvy and management expertise.

Investing in China, he said, offers about as many risks as rewards, thus, only companies with strong, established businesses here stand a good chance of duplicating their success in China.

There are ways to tip the odds in favor of succeeding in China, and local companies already in China offered some practical advice on how to ride the rampaging dragon during the forum held at the Global Cafe.

Study the market

Jude Ong, general manager of Bench Body, said it was vital for prospective companies to pay China several visits to get a more thorough knowledge of the market, the best location for the store and the products to be developed.

Visit at different times of the year, he said, as China has four distinct seasons. The market during the summer will likely be different from that of winter.

For Bench, once that due diligence was done and the plan to roll out the stores was finalized, the next problem was how to come up with the right product mix and advertising campaign to introduce the Bench brand in China.

Bring what you do best

Here is where Bench's innate strength in marketing kicked in.

Using the same tactic that worked so well for Bench Body in the Philippines, it got a Chinese model to endorse its underwear line and giant billboards featuring her in Bench products were put up in China.

"We brought to China what we do best here, our systems and products and it worked well," Ong said.

Thus, from the first store in December 2002, Bench now has six in Shanghai and two in Xiamen.

Ong said further expansion was in the works by way of franchising.

Best-selling products, he said, include polka dot underwear, especially the red ones.

Figaro chief executive officer Pacita U. Juan, on the other hand, said it helps a lot for small and medium enterprises to work with government offices in China, such as the Department of Trade and Industry, which has a commercial office in China to facilitate trade relations.

Juan said China puts a premium on government relations, thus, barriers to entry to China are brought down if SMEs get some help from government offices.

Figaro, she said, was encouraged to finally go into China after about two years of scouting prospects, when it took part in a trade mission organized by the DTI under Aquino. The trade fair in Shanghai in 2003, under the banner "Ties That Bind," opened China's eyes to what the country has to offer.

Aquino said the successful holding of that trade show, which was witnessed by top Chinese government officials including those from the central government in Beijing, gave Filipino firms something of a preferred status when they invest in China.

Get a translator

Juan said inability to speak Chinese is not a big problem when doing business in China since there are many interpreters in the market. Just make sure you have someone you can trust to faithfully translate what you are trying to say, especially during negotiations.

She added that part of the cost of setting up a business goes to the hiring of a business consultant—anywhere from $3,000 to $10,000—who will handle the necessary paperwork. And there is a lot involved.

Shanghai, for instance, has 17 districts, and a company must get a license to do business from a specific district where the shop will be operating. Setting up another store in another district means getting another permit.

SMEs, she said, also have to watch out for high rent in Shanghai, which is still the best market for SMEs because of the residents' high purchasing power and the presence of thousands of tourists and expatriates.

She said the rent in a prime spot in Shanghai is easily triple that of Greenbelt in the Makati central business district.

Juan, however, stressed that while the entry costs were significant, the risk of investing in China was still worth taking since the market is just opening up, just waiting for creative concepts that the Philippines has in abundance.

Challenge

For Figaro, the challenge is to get a tea-drinking nation to sample good coffee, Philippine style.

And the Philippine style of doing business does well in China. Take malls, for instance.

The SM group's first mall in Xiamen, where retailing magnate Henry Sy Sr. traces his roots, turned on the Chinese to the malling experience.

Walmart, one of the mall's anchor tenants even reported that its sales in that SM mall was one of the highest among its China operations, said SM first vice president Ric D. Camaligan.

Walmart was so successful in SM that it has even verbally committed to join SM as it expands in China, Camaligan said.

He added that the SM group also served as the house of other Philippine brands that are in China. About half of its tenants are Philippine companies, including Bench and Penshoppe.

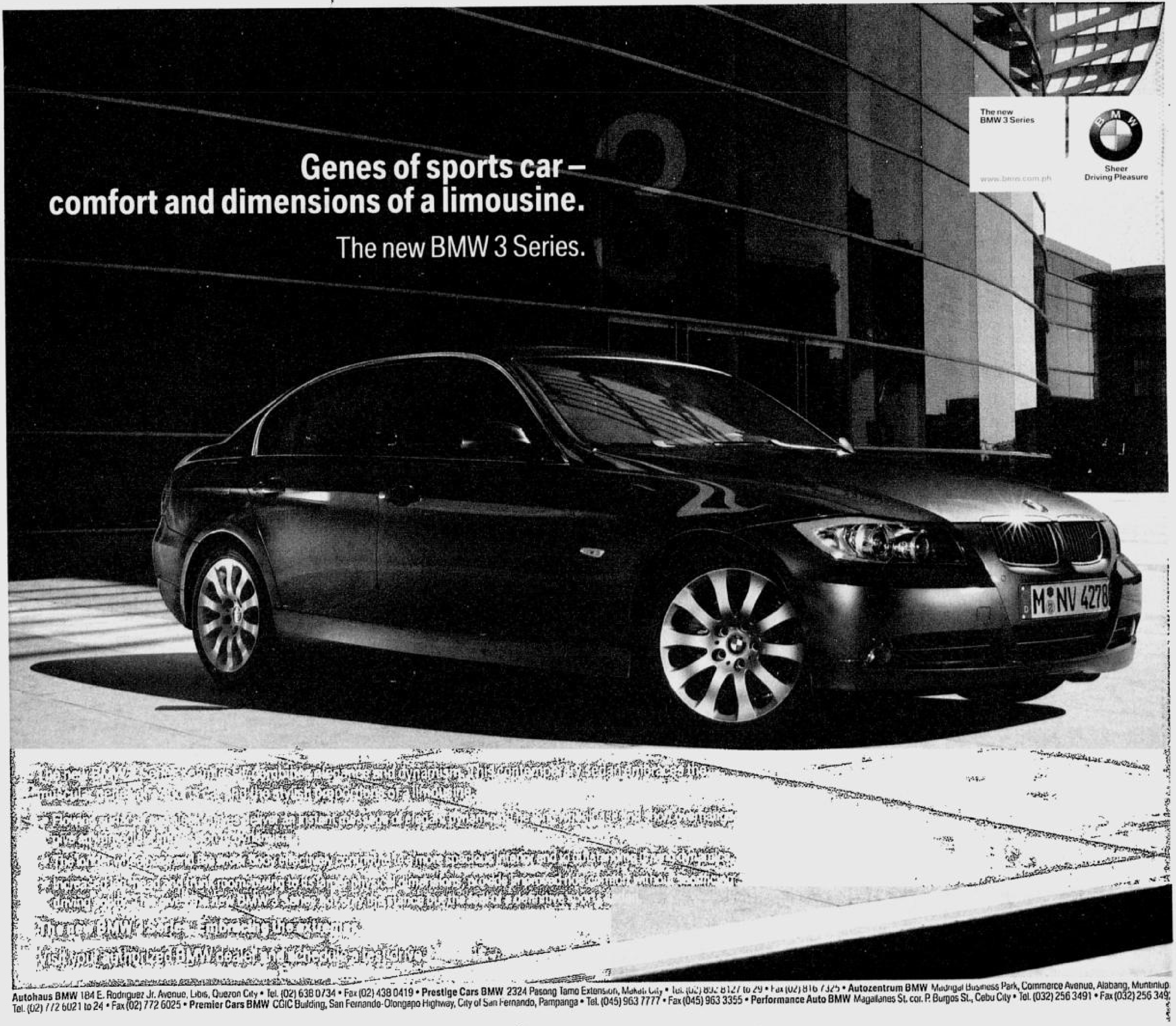
Study the market

Ambassador Jose E.B. Antonio, special envoy to China, offers more advice: take time to study China's diverse market. It may have large domestic market with 1.3 billion people, but it is not homogenous. The market has diversified cultures, tastes and disposable income.

Anybody planning to sell in China, he said, must find ways to successfully segment the market, and cater to the unique requirements of that niche market.

Aquino said there was every reason to believe that even more Filipino companies can make it in China, given the harmonious relationship between the Philippine and Chinese governments, the Chinese market showing signs of continued growth, and the Filipinos' creativity.

And the time to ride the dragon is now.



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DAY 1 : May 25, 2005

Session Chair: **Dr. Nick Fontanilla**
President, The Asia Pacific Center for Research

8:00 – 9:30 Registration/ Networking/ Morning Coffee

9:30 – 10:15 Opening Ceremonies
Keynote address: **Mr. Roberto De Ocampo**
President, Asian Institute of Management (AIM)

10:15- 11:15 Session One:
A Business Philosophy for Extreme Marketing: Pushing Your Limits in a Crisis Economy
A presentation on the business philosophies surrounding extreme marketing that have maximized marketing potentials in a challenging convergent environment aptly applied to the Asian Region as well as the local scenarios.

Speaker: **Mr. Bienvenido Policarpio**
Executive Vice President, Prudential Group of Companies, President, Dale Carnegie Philippines

11:15- 12:15 Session Two:
Customer Relationship Management: Building Technology to the Extreme

Speaker: **Mr. Mark Yambot**
Director for Corporate Affairs, Microsoft Philippines, Inc.

Lunch Break

1:30 – 1:45 Ice Breaker

1:45 – 2:45 Session Three:
Pain Makes Gains: Pharmaceutical Companies Going Beyond Pain
Proven local brand strategic applications in the pharmaceutical business that challenge global market leaders and players in creating ideal synergies for a convergent market.

Speaker: **Mr. Carlos "Do" Ejercito**
President, United Laboratories Group

2:45 – 3:45 Session Four:
The New Empire: Shaping the Future of High-Rise Condominiums
Guiding principles in braving the battle against big brothers in the real estate business despite the threatening and unstable socio-economic scenarios affecting business growth.

Speaker: **Mr. Luke Tan**
Director, Investor Relation, Megaworld

3:45 – 4:00 Break

4:00 – 5:00 Session Five:
Challenging Global Brands through Sports Marketing Events
Creative marketing executions that enliven the palette of consumers using convergent applications of events marketing thus bringing product promotion to extremely challenging standards.

Speaker: **Mr. Christophe Bezu**
Senior Vice President, Adidas-Salomon AG, Hong Kong

5:00 – 5:15 Recap by Session Chair

Day 2 : May 26, 2005

Session Chair: **Dr. Karen De Asis**
Marketing Director, La Salle Graduate School Marketing Consultant

8:00 – 9:00 Networking Coffee

9:00 – 10:00 Session Six:
Mega Formulas for Extreme Marketing from a Marketing Guru
A discussion on strategic principles of extreme marketing as presented by the world-renowned Hermawan Katajaya.

Speaker: **Mr. Hermawan Kartajaya**
President & Leading Service Officer, MarkPlus&Co.

10:00- 11:00 Session Seven:
The Telecommunications Industry Revealed: Telecommunications Convergence: Challenge to the Extreme!
Current trends and future strategic directions of the highly evolving telecommunications industry amidst the challenge of simultaneous product and market convergence.

Speaker: **To be announced**

11:00- 12:00 Session Eight:
The New Imperative in Today's Convergence in Marketing: Sustainable Growth
A closer look at the "must haves" in dealing with the challenges of convergence in marketing for businesses to thrive and achieve sustainable growth.

Speaker: **Mr. Gavin Coombes**
Vice President, Euro RSCG Asia Pacific

Lunch Break

1:00– 1:15 Ice Breaker 2

1:15 – 1:30 Agora Awards Launch / Other PMA Activities

1:30 – 2:30 Session Nine:
Mall Mania: Shop Until You Drop!
Revelations in the bullet-speed growth of the retail industry and the magnetic attraction of a converging business to a market mix of unique styles but common interests.

Speaker: **Ms. Grace Magno**
Head of Marketing, Araneta Group of Companies

2:30- 3:30 Session Ten:
New Rules in Market Leadership: Success Stories in Non-traditional Bank Marketing
Non-traditional rules applied to traditionally common practices that have created raves in the banking sector.

Speaker: **Mr. Tomas Victor Mendoza**
SAVP, Banco de Oro Universal Bank

3:30 – 3:45 Break

3:45 – 4:30 Session Eleven:
Creativity on the Edge: Media & Marketing Convergence
Strategic partnering innovations that unify media creativity and marketing excellence gearing to meet the challenge of convergence.

Speaker: **Mr. Nicanor Gabunada**
Senior Vice President for Integrated Sales & Marketing
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Company

4:30 – 5:15 Session Twelve:
Advertising Convergence: Bringing Filipino Consumers Closer to the Brand through Humor
A compilation of the interesting facets of humor in advertising that has sent light messages to the market but delivered solid bottom results to target sales.

Speaker: **Mr. Joselito Ortega**
Chairman & CEO, BrandLab, Inc.

5:15 – 5:45 Closing Session:
The Road to Recovery through Market Convergence
A presentation of ingenuous approaches for business revivals and growth in a converging market.

Speaker: **Mr. Jose Jesus Roces**
Professor, Asian Institute of Management (AIM)
President, Asia Pacific Marketing Federation (APMF)

5:45 – 6:00 Recap by Session Chair

For full programme schedule and other details:

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Want a free TV? Get this bank's new card first

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

WOULD you switch to another card company for a free TV?

HSBC, the world's local bank, launches today a new ad campaign tagged 'Unbelievable!' Under the promo, every new Gold Visa Card member of HSBC gets a Samsung Flat Screen TV—free.

The heart of the campaign is to get more people to shift to gold cards or to be able to get more people to apply for gold cards. So those who will seek upgrades from classic to gold and are approved will get the TV.

HSBC senior vice president for Marketing Suresh Nanoo says the campaign came from brainstorming sessions, identifying business objectives and doing research. Their studies show "gold cards are still where the opportunities are."

"The gold card segment is ignored and under penetrated particularly for HSBC which has a certain market presence," says HSBC Deputy CEO and Head of Personal Financial Services Martin Cook.

Industry estimates show only 20 percent of local credit card holders which number about two million have gold cards compared with the 30 to 40 percent level in other Asian countries like Singapore and Taiwan.

To qualify for an HSBC gold card, an applicant must have an annual gross income of P480,000 for Gold Visa and P1 million for Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold.

However the proof of income is waived if one is an existing cardholder for at least 12 months of certain cards provided the applicant includes his credit card account number and other details in his application.

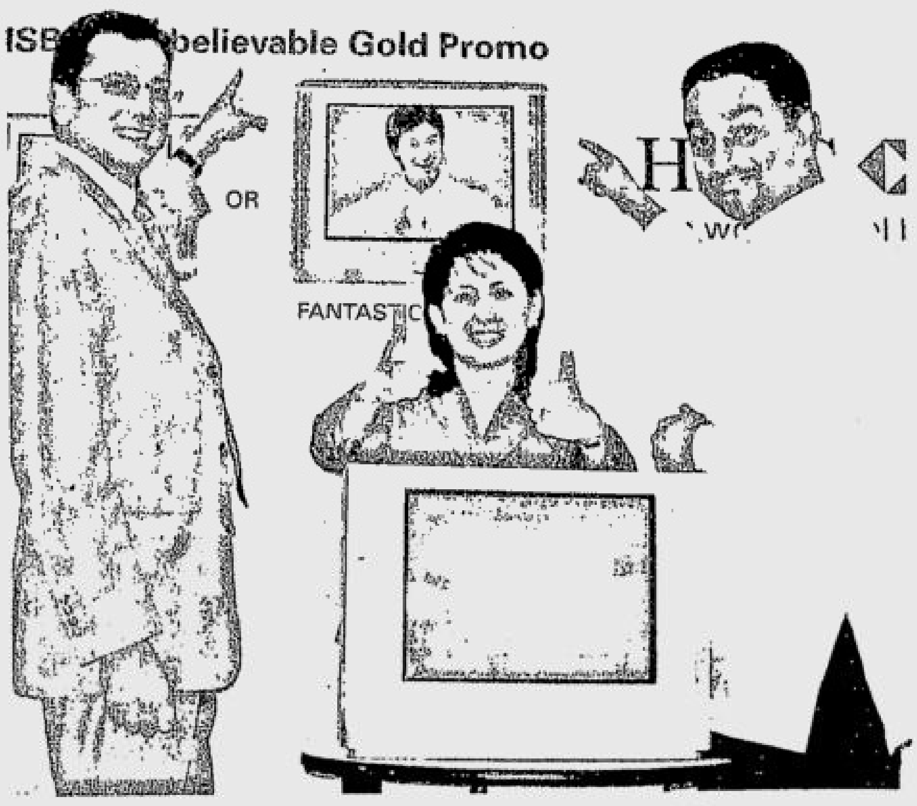
Cook says data from the Credit Card Association of the Philippines showed HSBC was the fastest growing credit card with the highest spending per card for the last quarter of last year.

And while pundits urge bank issuers to go for quality card holders rather than quantity, Cook says HSBC wants both quality and quantity.

Samsung was chosen as a partner because of the two firms "like minds" says Nanoo.

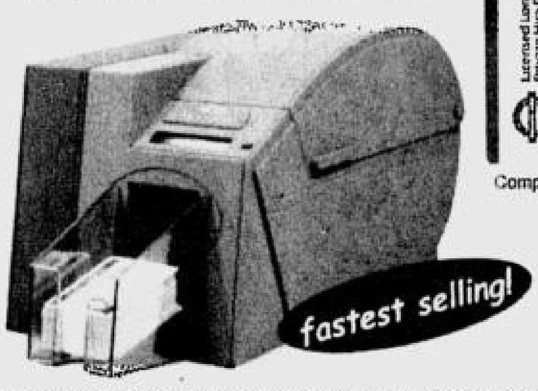
The 'Unbelievable!' promo was launched to some 2,000 sales agents of HSBC. The bank does not have direct employees who push for their cards, instead they tap about four firms to sell the cards. These are the people you see in the mall approaching you with an application form or calling you in the office to offer you a new card.

HSBC has close to 500,000 cardholders. Cook says card applications can go up by 300 percent during a promotional campaign.



(From left) HSBC's Martin Cook, Marion Balagot, and Suresh Nanoo.

COOK (left) with Samsung's VP for marketing Dong Ha Jang and Samsung president and CEO Hyuck Jae Shim



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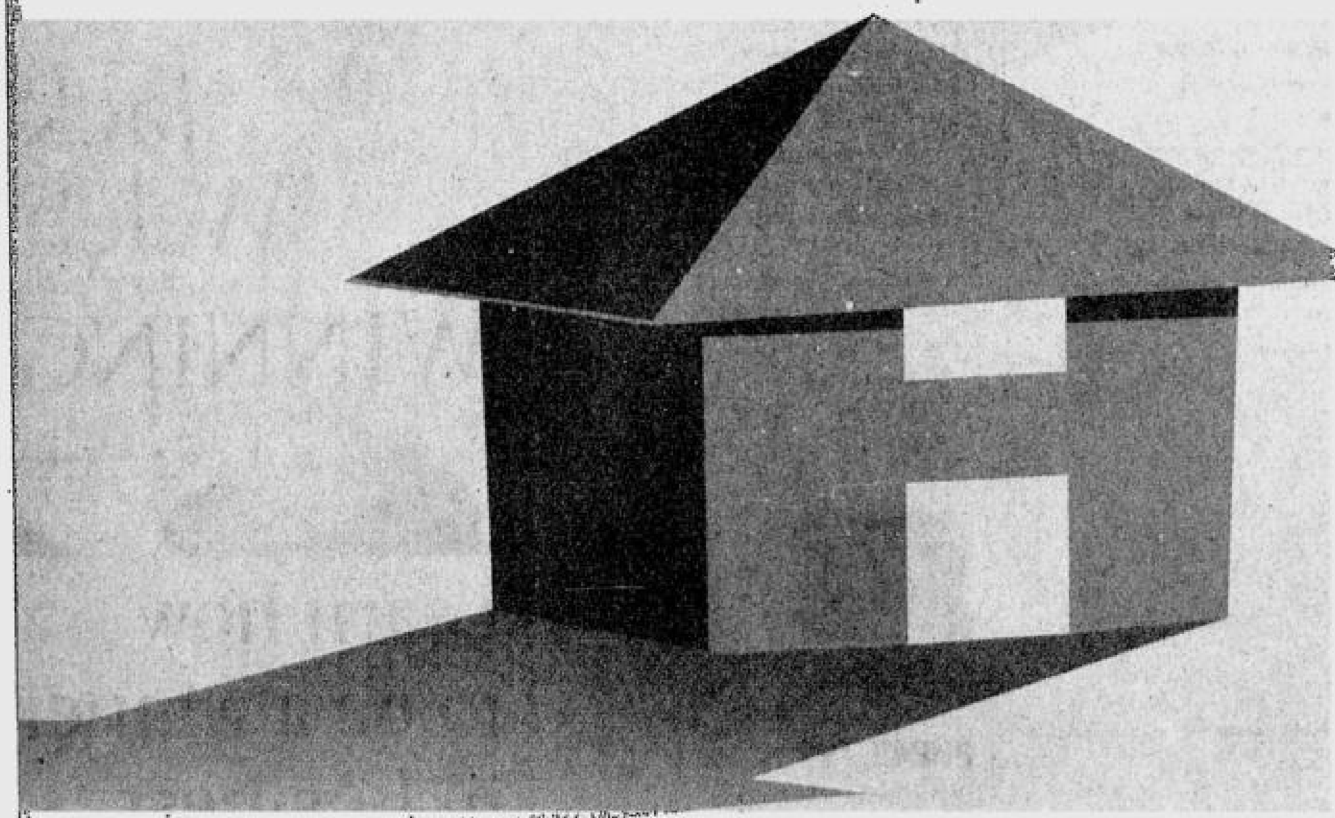

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BUSINESS*Monday*

What are you committed to?

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

WHAT do you think of when you hear the word commitment?

Perhaps you picture a loving husband caring for his invalid wife. Maybe you envision a business owner who puts her resources and reputation on the line to lead her company through a crisis. Perhaps you see a dedicated teacher who spends hours of his own time tutoring underprivileged children. Or maybe the scene that comes to mind is one of a group of soldiers who willingly enters harm's way to protect their countrymen.

These are all wonderful examples of commitment. But have you considered the fact that individuals who act in less admirable ways also are committed?

People who watch the clock at work are committed to making it through the day so they can go home. People who spend most of their free time in front of the television are committed to taking life easy. People who cheat on their income taxes are committed to beating the system.

Do you understand what I'm saying? When it comes to living a life of significance, the vital question isn't, "Am I committed?" It's, "What am I committed to?"

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to observe many remarkable individuals who I refer to as "make-a-difference people"—the kind of folks you want on your team and in your life because they're constantly making positive things happen. As I wrote in the last issue of "Leadership Wired," "make-a-difference" people stand out from everyone else because they are connected—to a great leader, to a powerful vision and to other people who want to make a difference.

Another critical factor that sets "make-a-difference people" apart is their deep level of commitment in four key areas:

1. Make-a-difference people are committed to excellence.

Conforming to someone else's standard of excellence isn't an option; they set their own bar, and they set it high. If you want to be a difference-maker, your bar of excellence should be higher than anyone else's. In other words, you should expect more out of yourself than anyone else expects out of you.

2. Make-a-difference people are committed to service.

George Burns once said, "When you stop giving and offering something to the rest of the world, it's time to turn out the lights." That is so true. Anyone can call himself a servant-leader, but that description is meaningless unless it's accompanied by action. True servanthood manifests itself in the following four ways:

It puts others ahead of an individual agenda. True servants aren't in it for themselves; they're committed to the growth and well-being of the people they're serving.

It begins with security. Service often takes us out of our comfort zone, and in order to function effectively in such unfamiliar territory, confidence is a necessity.

It initiates service to others. It doesn't wait to be served. It doesn't wait to be asked to serve. It goes first.

It is not position-conscious. You show me a person who serves, and I'll show you someone who cares little about titles.

3. Make-a-difference people are committed to growth.

I have found that there are three types of people on earth: the unlearned, the learned and the learning. If you want to make a positive contribution with your life, never stop stretching and growing. Make a concerted effort to learn today what will help you do better tomorrow. If you grow in the right areas today, you'll reap the right rewards tomorrow.

4. Make-a-difference people are committed to giving.

The reason for this is simple: Giving is the highest level of living. Here are four ways to develop a giving spirit in your life:

Be grateful for whatever you have. It's hard to be generous when you always want more for yourself.

Put people first. The measure of a leader is not the number of people who serve him, but the number of people whom he serves.

Don't allow the desire for possessions to control you. This is so critical. Do you control your money, or does your money control you?

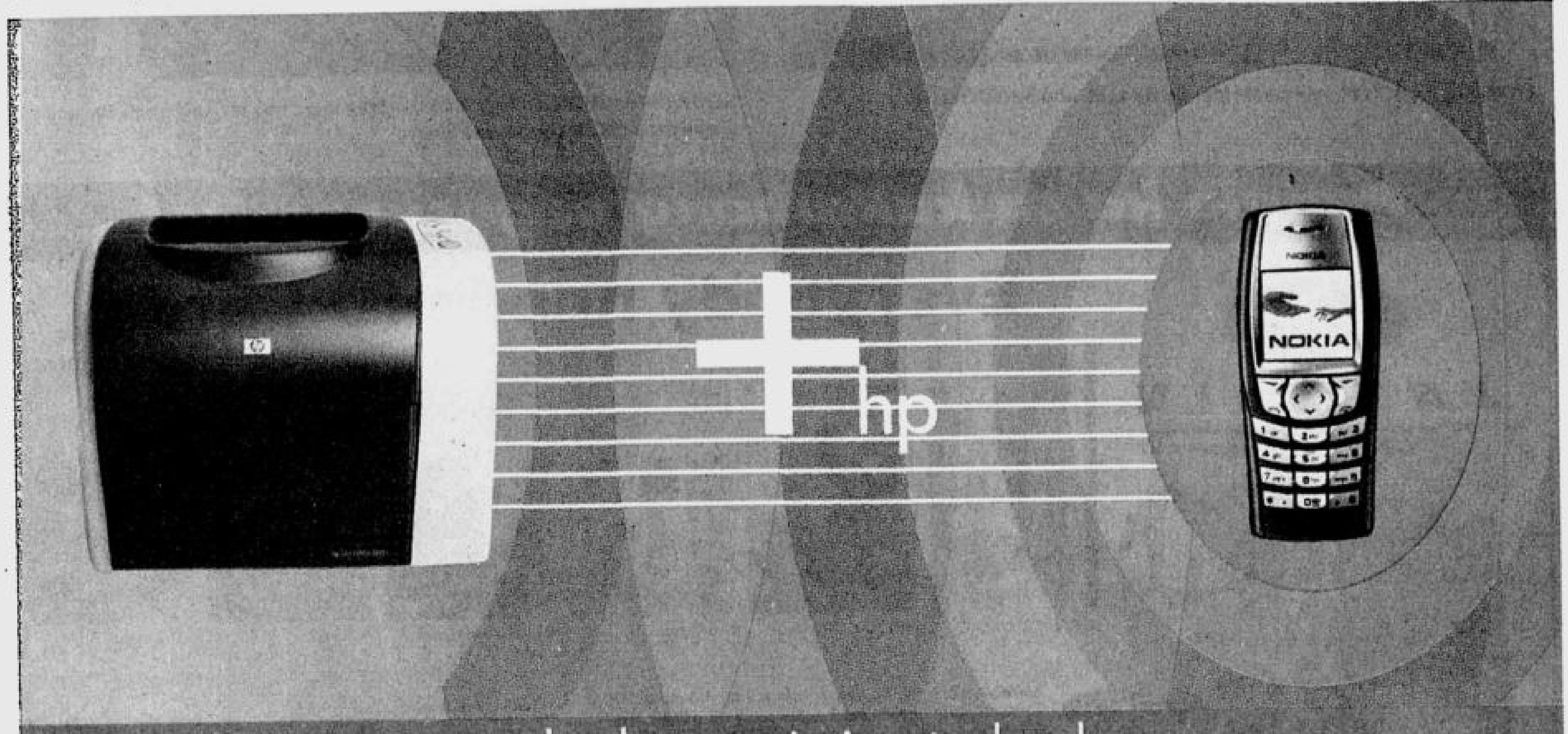
Develop the habit of giving. Author Richard Foster made a profound statement about this: "Just the very act of letting go of money or some other treasure does something within us," he said. "It destroys the demon greed."

Now that I've described the characteristics that set make-a-difference people apart, it's time to get personal. Do you want to make a difference in your business, your community, your family or any other area of life that is important you? If your answer is yes, I have one more question for you.

Are you making a difference—wherever you are, whatever you're doing?

I certainly hope so. But if not, don't get discouraged. Instead, as I said last time, get busy. There's no time like the present to become a make-a-difference person.

Send your comments or questions to slvguru@pldtdsl.net



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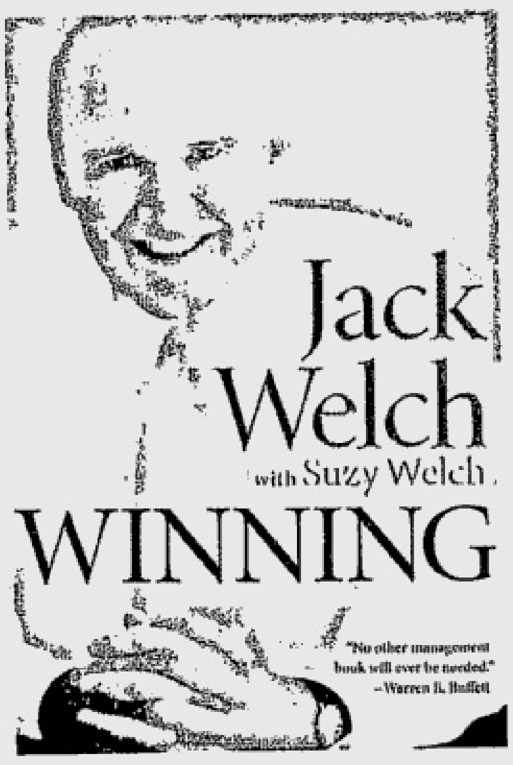
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Co-written by his wife Suzy, the book is packed with personal anecdotes and written in Jack's distinctive straightforward tone. Winning is both a good read and a good business book. It offers deep insights, original thinking and simply advice that are bound to change the way people think about work.

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Philippine Association of Secretaries & Administrative Professionals, Inc.

An organization of professionals committed to excellence

The celebration of Secretaries' Week, April 24-30, emphasizes on the invaluable role of secretaries and administrative professionals in the workplace.

MY WARMEST greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Association of Secretaries and Administrative Professionals (PAS) on the occasion of your National Convention.

The Philippine Association of Secretaries and Administrative Professionals [illegible] uplifting the standards of secretarial and administrative profession in our country. I laud your noble mission of [illegible] individual and collective worth, competence and [illegible] of secretaries and administrative professionals.

Your theme, "The Power of Now," is a clear manifestation that members of PAS are keen in getting [illegible] the needs of today's fast-changing workplace [illegible] modern approaches [illegible] the skills, general knowledge and work attitude [illegible]

May you carry on with your common goal [illegible]

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

[illegible] Professional Secretaries' Week.

[illegible] professionals [illegible] celebration [illegible]

[illegible] equally commendable [illegible]

The theme of the National Convention [illegible] "The Power of NOW" is not only timely but [illegible] and we know it is short. Times are changing and our roles as administrative professionals are evolving. The race to catch up with technological trends and development [illegible] There is a constant change in customer demands [illegible] the value and worth of employees. Technology has helped [illegible] global [illegible] has ever changed the rules of business [illegible]

The PAS is gaining strength with the continued commitment of the members to [illegible] objectives [illegible] service leadership and excellence [illegible] strengthening the Association's image [illegible] vital component in industry and nation-building.

Again my thanks and [illegible] congratulations [illegible] well done! [illegible] sponsors who helped [illegible]

Happy Secretaries & Administrative Professionals' Week!

SALLY B. MAGALONG
President

SECRETARIES' Week [illegible] opportunity for the business [illegible] to recognize and show appreciation [illegible] invaluable contribution [illegible] their secretaries [illegible]

Many people in the business community [illegible] still unaware [illegible] advanced in the past few decades and the full extent of the secretary's capabilities. Today's secretaries have expanded their roles in the workplace in response to innovations in technology and the changing needs of business. This new breed of secretaries have mastered the new technologies [illegible] productivity. In fact the technological [illegible] day which will [illegible] millennium will be implemented [illegible] administrative professionals.

From the words of [illegible] International Association of Administrative Professionals [illegible] an administrative professional [illegible] one of the world's largest [illegible]

And the members of the Philippine Association of Secretaries and Administrative Professionals [illegible] our colleagues [illegible] Secretaries' Week.

Cathy Matutina
CATHY J. MATUTINA
Assistant Secretary
Chairman
Professional Secretaries' Week

PROCLAMATION

Malacañan Palace
Manila
By the President of the Philippines

Proclamation No. 35

Amending Proclamation No. 153 dated March 19, 1993, by transferring the observance of the Secretaries' Week to the last full week of April of every year instead of the third week of April every year.

Whereas, the Philippine Association of Secretaries is recognized for its vital role in promoting professionalism in the private sector;

WHereas, Secretaries' Week is internationally celebrated on the last full week of April of each year with the intervening Wednesday designated as Secretaries' Day;

Whereas, the Philippine Association of Secretaries should be given the opportunity to commemorate its annual anniversary with fitting ceremonies;

Now, therefore, I, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines, by the virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby amend Proclamation No. 153 dated March 19, 1993, by transferring the observance of Secretaries' Week to the last full week of April of every year, instead of the third week of April of every year, under the auspices of the Philippine Association of Secretaries.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

Done in the City of Manila, this 20th day of April, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and One.

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

(Seated) **SALLY B. MAGALONG**, President; (standing L-R) **RUBY S. CABUHAT**, Auditor; **AMELIA O. MEDRANO**, Assistant Treasurer; **CATHY J. MATUTINA**, Assistant Secretary; **CAROLE M. ESTABAYA**, Secretary; **ANNE V. ODERO**, Vice-President-Internal Affairs; **ESTELA P. ISIDRO**, Public Relations Officer; **FRANCES V. PERIA**, Vice-President-External Affairs; **NHORLYNNE B. ESCOBAR**, Treasurer.

1958 – 2005 47 YEARS OF EXISTENCE

The Philippine Association of Secretaries or PAS, now renamed Philippine Association of Secretaries & Administrative Professionals, was registered with the SEC on March 7, 1958. It is an affiliate member of the IAAP (International Association of Administrative Professionals) based in Kansas, USA. It maintains local chapters in key cities and boasts of members working for the top 1000 corporations nationwide. Over the years, it has evolved into a premier organization of professionals committed to furthering its growth and complementing the government's efforts on leadership development and becoming a business partner in the nation's progress.

It now observes its 47 years of existence and joins the whole world in celebrating Secretaries' Week on April 24-30 this year. The event recognizes the invaluable role secretaries and administrative professionals play in the workplace. It holds an annual convention attended by professional colleagues nationwide. This year's convention theme is: "The Power of Now".

Dynamic professionalism and passion for excellence of its members are the core mandate of the PAS that requires a commitment to continuous learning, leadership skills development, and community development. Thus, this year's choice of the PAS theme: "Expertise and Excellence in the Global Milieu".

In affirmation of its role in society, we reiterate that:

- PAS is an association that provides a medium for personal growth and professional development of executive secretaries, executive assistants and administrative professionals;
- PAS is an organization that is nurtured by its members and supported by top management in both government and private sectors.
- PAS is an advocacy group where members enjoy rapport and camaraderie and work towards its common goal of enriching their lives and those of the marginalized members of our society;
- PAS is a cohesive group where networking alliances and friendship make possible the existence of a symbiotic relationship among its members;
- PAS provides the best forum to prepare, educate and mentor students and young professionals as they enter the realm of the corporate workplace;
- PAS is committed to the advancement and respect for the profession of executive secretaries and administrative professionals;
- PAS complements the government's efforts on leadership development and transformation.

ORGANIZATION

The Association is run by a nine-member Board of Directors elected annually by members.

The PAS president appoints other members to head the following committees to carry out its various projects: Membership, Programs, Seminars & Development, Recruitment & Screening, NewsMagazine & Journal Publication, Civic Affairs, Educational Liaison, Speakers Bureau, Placement, Publication, Election, Grandslam I & II, Sports, and Secretaries' Week.

CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Social awareness and community involvement of its members are carried through its various outreach programs, e.g., medical missions, feeding programs for indigents, visits to boarding facilities for the aged, etc.

Another major continuing project of the PAS is the PAS Development Foundation (PASDF)scholarship program. Conceived in 1978, it has provided free college education to many poor and deserving students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP). Presently, there are 14 scholars who are graduating next year. Another batch will be chosen by June, 2005. A significant number of PAS scholars who have graduated are now gainfully employed and have provided a secure future for their family members.

ASA CONGRESS

The PAS is also the founding member of the Association of Secretaries and Administartive Professionals in Asia and the Pacific Region (ASA) including Australia and New Zealand that holds regular biennial Congress and formed during the incumbency of PAS Past President Virginia "Gin" Elbinias. Venue is rotated among the member nations. The highlight of the Congress is the selection of the Professional Secretary Award.

Through the years, the ASA Congress has been well attended and had become an ideal venue for personal interaction and exchange of ideas and information related to the administrative profession among the members.

ASA comprise of the following member-countries: Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Malaysia, Taiwan, HongKong, Pakistan, Japan, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and New Zealand.

The "Administrative Professional of the Year" Award

Erstwhile called the Secretary of the Year Award or SOY, The Administrative Professional of the Year (APY) award seeks to commend the PAS member-secretary who exemplifies the qualities of a professional secretary and represents the high ideals of the association. Further, the yearly competition is done to create an awareness on the significance of our role as one; and; an appreciation for doing our job with passion, commitment, and excellence.

Winning the award is a defining moment for the victor. But the climax does not end here. Awards have more depth and meaning. Receiving one commands more responsibilities, draws higher expectations, offers new challenges, and opens a broader horizon for the winner to explore and conquer.

These plus the promise of major prizes like foreign travel were incentives that drew candidates from different business sectors.

2005 APY Finalists: Joji Domantay, Rheza Sevilla, Liz Fernandez and Leila Dallo

BABETTE REVILLA LAUDIT

Y2004 SECRETARY OF THE YEAR

Success nowadays equates to four factors: Passion... Commitment... Excellence... Agility... And surely our Y2004 Secretary of the Year Awardee (SOY), Ms. Mary Liza R. Laudit, possesses all these traits that gave her the cutting edge in the corporate world.

Babette, as she is fondly called by her friends and peers, won this prestigious award besting three other finalists in a very tight competition where her mettle as a very effective executive secretary was put into test. She successfully hurdled several written examinations and a battery of panel interviews that sought to 'unearth' the nominees' capability and maturity to handle such a delicate and sensitive position as Executive Secretary to the President or CEO in the business community.

Babette represented the PAS in the search for the much coveted Professional Secretary Award during the ASA Congress held in Singapore in July, 2004. Finalists in this competition came from ASA member countries in the Asia Pacific region including New Zealand and Australia. While Babette did not win (the delegate from Pakistan did), her showing during the panel and stage interviews proved that she is at par with the best in the region.

She served initially as the Executive Secretary to the EVP for Operations before becoming the Executive Secretary of Mr. Edgardo Bautista, President of Mirant Philippines, a highly valued and sensitive position that enable her to touch base and interact with her counterparts in the head office of Mirant in the U.S.

She enjoys simple things in life like reading a good novel, listening to jazz music or simply staying at home with her family. She adores her seven-month old daughter, Erin Muriel who together with her loving and supportive husband Adolf, are her inspiration in all the work she does.

Babette's parting words: "...There is no such word as LIMIT and that OPPORTUNITY is all around us... we just have to GRAB and SEIZE it.." Very well said and done.

Executive of the Year (EOY)

The Executive of the Year (EOY) award gives due recognition to the executive who has the outstanding qualities of a leader and who encourages the professional growth of his/her secretary.

Mr. Vedit Kurangil, PAS EOY for Y2004, is VK to everyone — friends and business colleagues as well as to employees of Executive International Movers, Inc. where he served as its President & CEO while in the Philippines.

He stayed in Manila for only a number of years but these were enough for him to immerse himself fully to mainstream society, understand and appreciate Filipino ways and culture.

VK is the ultimate professional who is liberal in all aspects and one who gives full autonomy to his staff. His policy of "letting go, learn from it, and adopt your own style" kind of management gives much leeway for his employees to exercise self discipline, make decisions, and become more flexible and dynamic. He is adept in seeing through one's potential and makes sure the employee is given the chance and motivated to prove his worth. These make him a true leader in the eyes of his staff, earning their respect and admiration.

He enjoyed much his stay in the Philippines and gained a lot of friends with whom he played golf, a sport he is very much passionate about.

He is charity personified and personally involved himself, giving his time, efforts and financial supports to many local charity projects such as Clean & Green Policy of Pasig, Bantay Kalikasan, Elsie Gatches, Tahanang Walang Hagdan, Habitat, Run for A Cause for Cancer Patients, a program of the Canadian Embassy, to name a few.

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FEATURE

The Administrative Professional in the 21st century

By: Chat M. Maneja
Innove Communications, Inc.

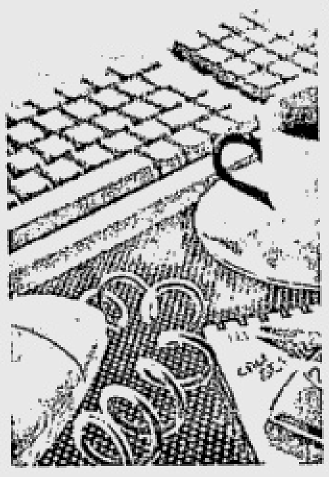
THE IT revolution that gained momentum in the '90s spawned a new breed of professionals who are instrumental to the successful Y2K crossover. The world was caught in the vortex of change.

Numerous challenges and paradigm shifts accompanied this change and altered the lives of people, the nature of the industry, business styles and structure of organizations.

The IT revolution paved the way to globalization and resulted to seamless borders that made the world smaller, time shorter and relationship denser. Information became free flowing.

Young and old alike caught the 'get connected' fever with faster broadband technology. The wireless business made possible communication with other people in different geographic locations and time zones.

Customers have become more demanding, requiring sensitivity and proactivity to their needs. Thus, organizations evolved from the traditional pyramid, to flat, to customer-centric. They realized that to emerge as market leader and sustain the No. 1 position, they must not only ensure customer satisfaction but also gain customer trust and loyalty.



Dynamism required innovation. To 'value add' and differentiate the product from competition has become the goal.

These are seen on new products and services that virtually "created a need" for consumers or sway them to subscribe to them as these products necessarily become an integral part of their lives.

This is very much evident in the wireless technology or in cellphone text messaging business.

Aside from being responsive and flexible, speed in delivery and agility became the norm as companies aim to shorten the time cycle between decision and action when faced with variable factors.

Factors can be changes in customer needs, competitive moves, deregulation or technological innovation.

This was very well said and emphasized by Globe Telecom President and CEO Gerry C. Ablaza, Jr., in his presentation during the panel discussion at the Asia Business Leader Summit last year.

People become aware that they need to acquire new attitudes, new knowledge and new skills to insure their marketability.

There is a great demand for knowledge workers and transformative leadership and companies competed for these so called 'intellectual properties,' giving birth to the Era of Human Capital.

With technology as an ultimate enabler, a new breed of Executive Secretaries and Administrative Professionals have emerged with key competencies that match and respond to factors of agility and flexibility needed in the workplace.

These are imperative to effectively discharge their support functions to business leadership and also ensure their marketability in a very competitive working environment.

Over the years, these changes and alternatives offered by technology evolution have constantly redefined, reengineered and reformed the job of the Administrative Professional.

Their job today call for self-empowerment or an upgrade of skills and increased proficiency in a variety of factors, e.g , innovativeness or creativity, cross-cultural adeptness, emotional maturity, and knowledge management.

The last factor refers to the individual's ability for creative thinking, self-expression, and sharing or selling of his ideas.

On a wider perspective, it also refers to the challenge companies are faced with in motivating employees to generate, process and share fruitful ideas, taking into account individual traits and cultural differences.

It has also become imperative for administrative professionals to have a firm grasp on the business of their respective companies -- their products and services, and the total business outlook.

This encompasses also an appreciation of the company's corporate goals, values and philosophies that help the Administrative Professional not only in the performance of her job but also in projecting a good corporate image for the company.

Veering away from convention, the work of the Administrative Professional took a new form as they become more dynamic in nature.

Thus, the Secretary has 'graduated' from the traditional 'Girl Friday' image to a more competent and effective working partner of the business executive.

These changes and challenges paved the way for her to metamorphose into a more effective business partner of bosses whose core competencies and key result areas (KRAs) are closely knitted and aligned to company objectives.

From then on, there was no turning back as the world was caught in the vortex of change.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES DURING THE Y2005 SECRETARIES' WEEK

April 24

Mass – Sto. Niño Dela Paz Chapel
Greenbelt, Makati

April 25 & 26

National Convention
Rigodon Ballroom
The Peninsula Manila Hotel

April 27

Secretaries' Night
Garcia-Villa-Balmori
The Peninsula Manila Hotel

April 28

free day

April 29

Executives Night
Captain's Bar
The Mandarin Hotel

April 30

Civic Medical Mission
Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Lot 1B, El Dorado Avenue
Levitown Subdivision
Bicutan, MM

ASA Congress, Brunei Bandar Seri Darusalaam. PAS delegates wearing the traditional Filipina costumes. From left to right: Angie Maramba (Bayer Phils.), Chat Maneja (Innove Communications, Inc.), Nannette Herrerra (Covanta Energy), Chollie Ballesteros (Mirant Phils.), ASA Founding President/PAS PP Gin Elbinias, Lilian Coloma (Philam Travel), Annie Paggao (Glaxo SmithKline), Babette Laudit (Mirant Phils.), Zeny Manlangit (Shell Gas Exploration) and Stel Nacua (British Embassy).

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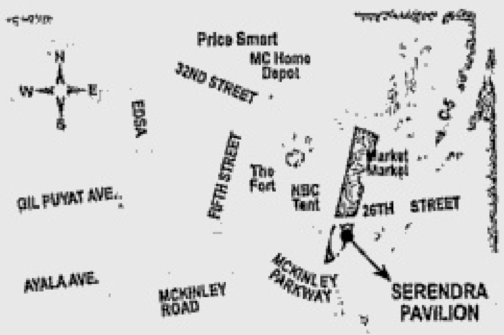

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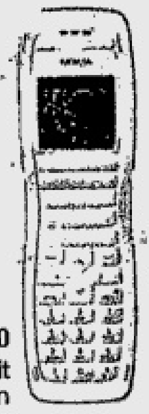

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P99
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Drawings of children of prisoners in the Nazi concentration camp in the Czech Republic remind us of the horrors of war and inhumanity

THE CHILDREN in the Terezin Ghetto during a visit paid by a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Several months later, these children were gassed in Auschwitz.

THE JEWS assembled before leaving for their transport train

Have you heard of Terezin?

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

NO, I HAVEN'T. Of Buchenwald and Auschwitz, yes. But I have not heard of Terezin.

It turns out to be a medieval town in Czechia (the Czech Republic, having separated from Slovakia) where more than 140,000 Jews—men, women and children—were brought in by the Nazis during World War II (1939-45).

It was a ghetto, a concentration camp with a difference. Arts and letters flourished there—for a time, anyway.

To make Filipinos aware of Terezin and of the Filipino-Czech connection—14 Czech soldiers participated in the defense of Bataan during the Second World War, and seven Czechs died during the Death March—the Czech Embassy and the Israeli Embassy have scheduled "Remembering Terezin" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on April 28-29.

Czech Ambassador Stanislav Slavicky and Israeli Ambassador Yehoshua Sagi, during a recent press conference at Café Apassionata in Makati City, said a film will be shown, an exhibit will be opened, and a concert will be held during those two days.

Among the other panelists in the press conference were CCP vicepresident Nanding Josef and Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra director Eugene Castillo.

The exhibit is titled "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," and features the drawings, watercolors and poetry of the children who were interred in the concentration camp along with their parents. There were close to 11,000 children in Terezin, and most of them also met a tragic fate.

"After many years, a collection of the children's paintings was discovered," said Slavicky.

Forty of these are displayed in the exhibit, including "Bird and Butterfly" by an unknown artist; "Room with Bunkbed," a watercolor by Erika Taussig; and "Terezin Barracks," a watercolor on tinted paper by Sonja Waldensteinova.

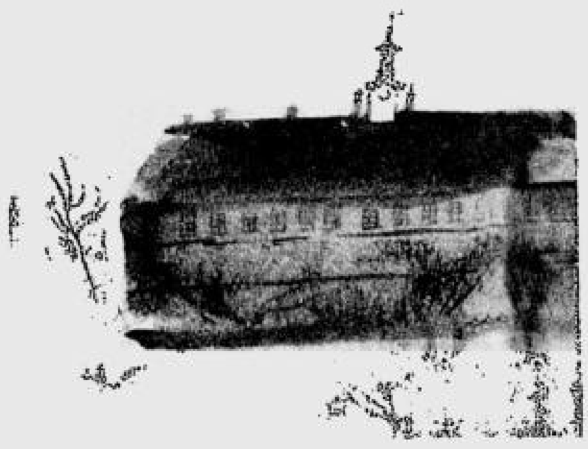
The first two are rendered in bright, lively colors while the third is in dark tones, giving a hint of menace.

Terezin had a large number of artists, musicians, scientists and scholars. The Nazis allowed them a cultural life; and there were theatrical performances, a library, literary magazine, lectures and painting sessions.

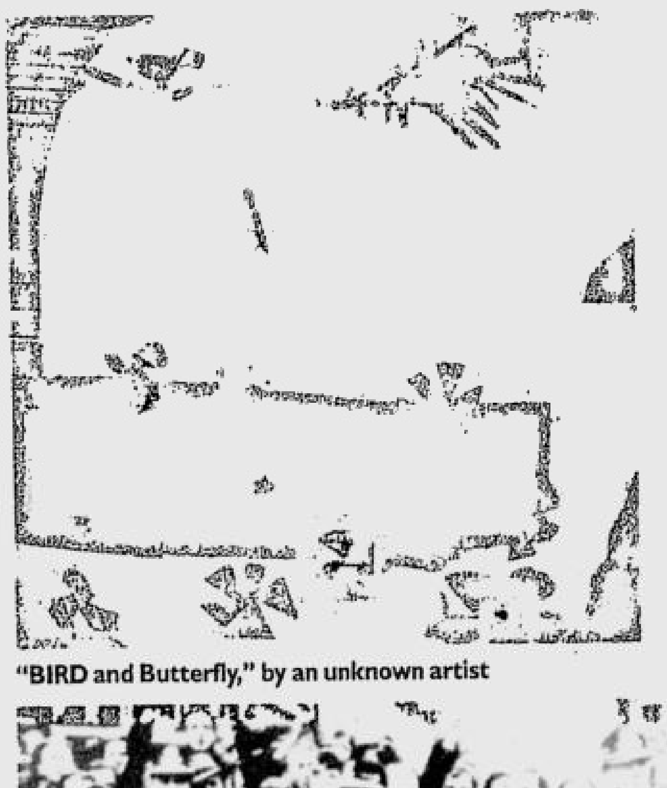
"It was a showcase of the Nazi regime, to offset all those reports about Nazi atrocities," declared Sagi.

As the tide of war turned against Germany, however, conditions in the concentration camps, Terezin included, grew worse.

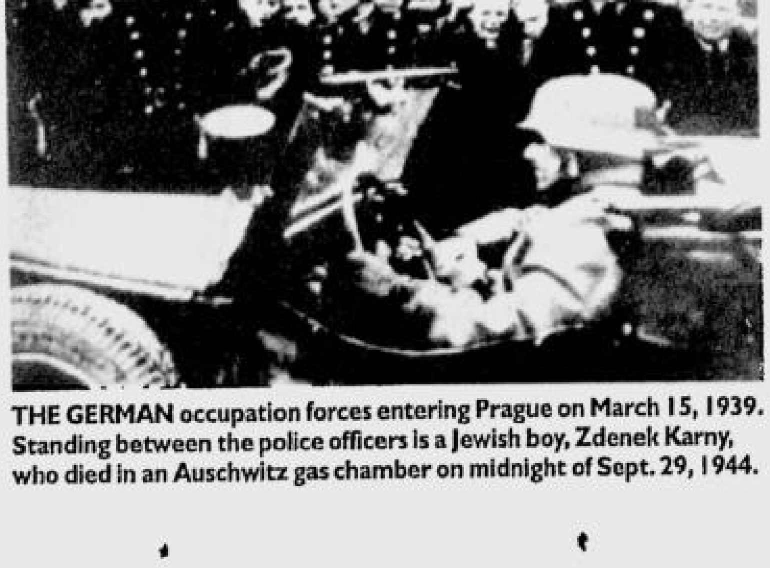
Only 37,000 survived Terezin. And only 2,000 survivors are alive today.



"TEREZIN Barracks," by Sonja Waldensteinova



"BIRD and Butterfly," by an unknown artist



THE GERMAN occupation forces entering Prague on March 15, 1939. Standing between the police officers is a Jewish boy, Zdenek Karny, who died in an Auschwitz gas chamber on midnight of Sept. 29, 1944.

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Tribute to triumph of human spirit

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

LEAVING the railway station at Bohusovice nad Ohri, people who arrived in the transports had to walk the 2.5 km distance to Terezin on foot. Some of the old and sick people did not survive that journey.

ON APRIL 20, 1945, new prisoners began to be brought in Terezin by evacuation transports from other Nazi camps.

TEREZIN, a town in the Czech Republic, was one of several hundreds of thousands but the largest Jewish concentration camp during the Second World War.

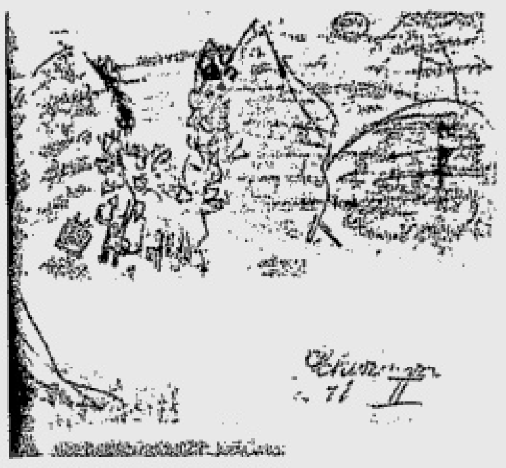
Converted into a ghetto, Theresiendat, it became so overcrowded, resulting in the loss of so many thousands of lives. Though some six-million Jews perished, many managed to survive.

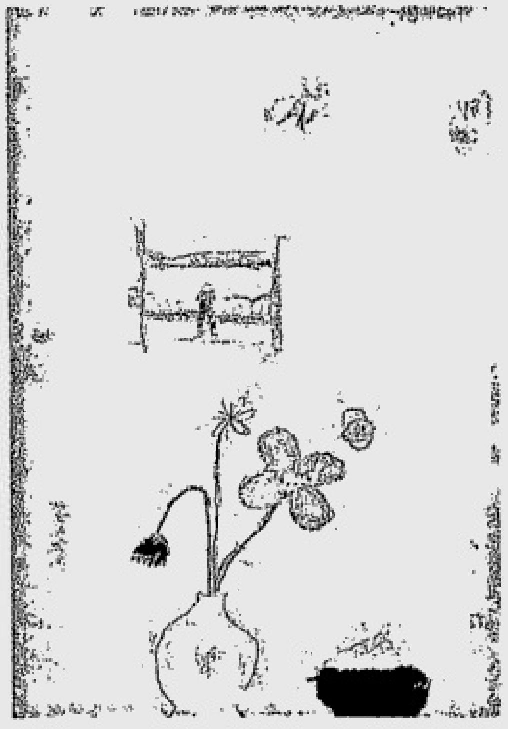
As a reminder of the madness and fanaticism of the past, and to celebrate the triumph of the Jewish gallant spirit to survive, "Remembering Terezin" will be held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) April 28-29.

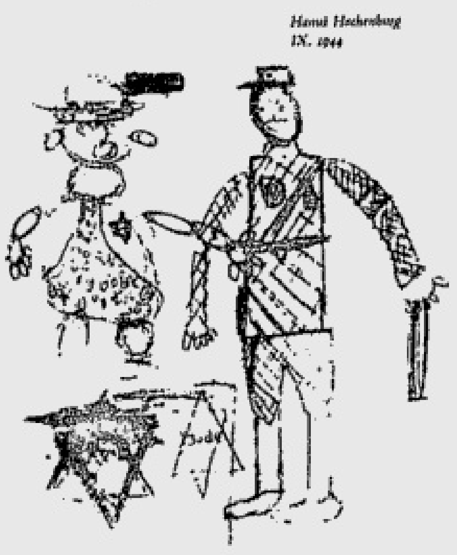
> 'Remembering Terezin' is also a reminder of the madness and fanaticism of the past

This was announced by Stanislav Slavicky, Czech ambassador to the Philippines, in a press launch at the Grappas Restaurant on Reposo St., Makati City. Edilberto B. Bravo, proprietor of the restaurant, hosted the lunch that included a generous sampling of an original Czech beer, Pivo Praha, exclusively served at Grappas.

He and the ambassador informed members of the media that "pilsen," associated with beer, was the name of a town in the Czech Republic known for a quality brew called Pilsner beer.


"SCALING the Mountains"


"ROOM with Bunkbed," by Erika Taussig



"NAZI Threatening Jew"

3-in-1

The celebration will be a three-in-one event, explained Fernando Josef, artistic director of the CCP. It will include an exhibit, " I Never Saw Another Butterfly," at the Little Theater lobby, the screening of the film "Transport from Paradise" at the Tanghalang Manuel Conde on April 28; and the concert "Music from Terezin," at the Main Theater at 8 p.m. on the 29th.

The concert will feature the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, with Eugene Castillo conducting.

The CCP, said Josef, was proud to be part of the event. So was the Embassy of Israel, said Ambassador Yehoshua Sagi. Israeli pianist Noam Sivan will be the featured soloist, performing Ullmann's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra.

The concert program will consist of works composed in Terezin by Czech Jewish composers who were detained at the camp. These include Scherzo Triste, Op.5 by Pavel Haas, and "Partita for Strings" by Gideon Klein.

Ullmann, Haas and Klein helped keep life bearable in the concentration camp. They kept themselves busy composing new works, and helped stage performances, thus making the musical life alive. The musical presentations touched the lives of their co-prisoners, and gave them hope for their eventual liberation.

Multi-faceted

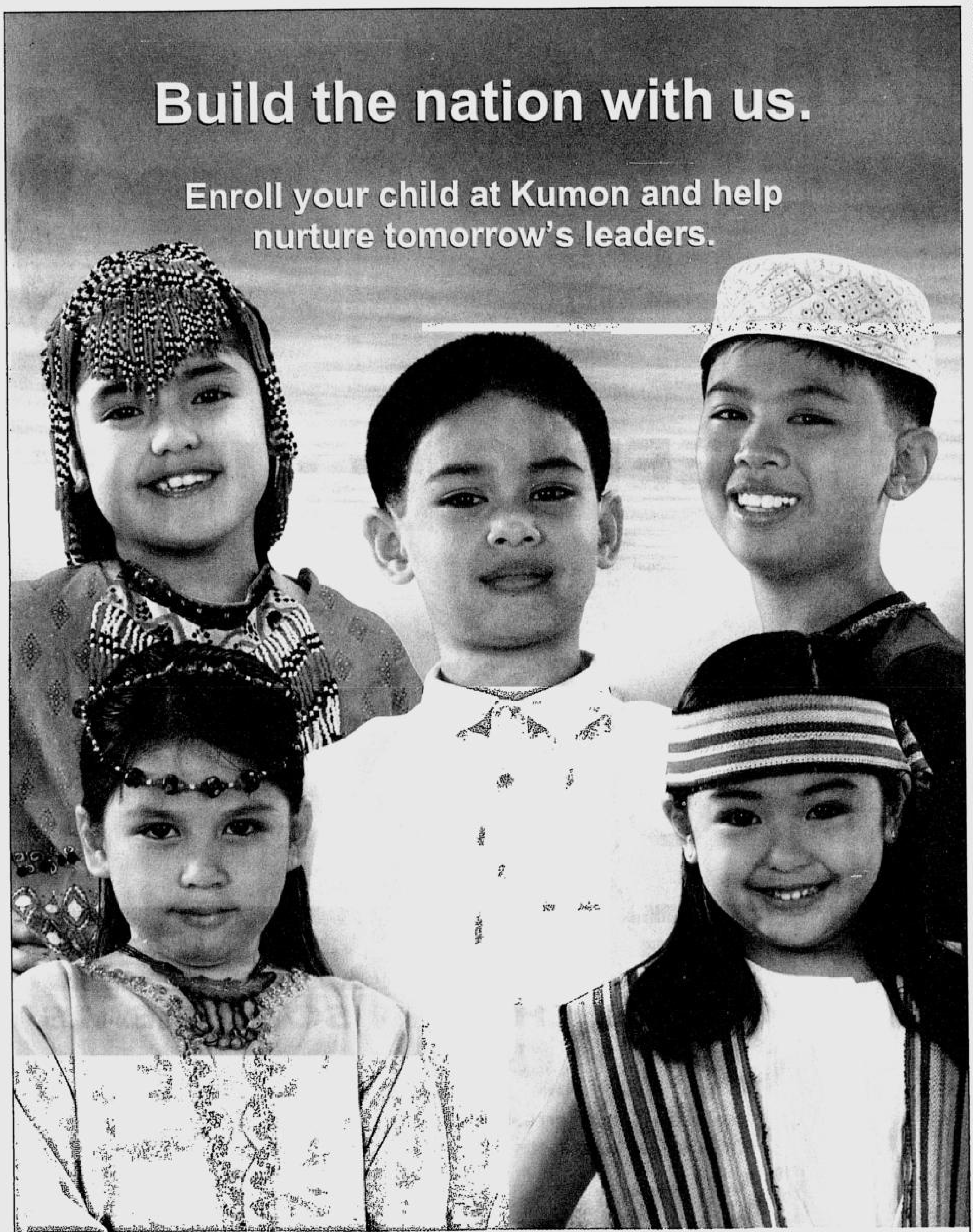
Sivan is a thorough musician. Apart from being a concert pianist, he is also a composer, arranger and improviser. His compositions represent a variety of genres, including orchestra music, chamber ensemble, solo instrument, chorus, dance, film and theater.

He has a C.V. Starr doctoral fellowship at the Juilliard School of Music in New York. He was a grand prizewinner in several competitions and recipient of awards such as the Magda Meyers Piano Competition, Jerusalem Duo Competition, Italian Sanguinetto Chamber Music Prize, Subin Mehta AICF Scholarship in piano and composition, and the Ben Haim Special Award for Israeli Music.

Call 8321125 loc. 160830.

AMB. STANISLAV Slavicky of Czech Republic

AMB. YEHOSHUA Sagi of Israel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CECIL Guidote Alvarez, National Commission for Culture and the Arts executive director, and Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca sign an agreement for a "cultural consortium" between the Isabela government, Department of Tourism and Cagayan state universities. The NCCA will provide Kalahi cultural services for the Cagayan people. Angadaan Mayor Jose Panganiban suggested the consortium.

Leaño and Jimenez at West, Saavedra at Mag:net, Austria at CCP

VISUAL ARTS

ERWIN Leaño goes back to rendering one of his favorite subjects, landscapes, in his latest, "Horizons." His new works in oil on canvas, which focus on horizons on different levels, can be viewed on April 28-May 10 at West Gallery in SM Megamall. The artist gets his inspiration from rice fields that he'd normally see when passing by Morong, Tanay and Baras in Rizal. Call 6341284.

MEANWHILE, at the West Gallery's Sculpture Room, Pete Jimenez continues to draw on imagination and instincts in "Still on Steel," until May 10. The exhibit features a collection of sketches, with steel as the artist's drawing instrument. Call 4110332 or 4119221.

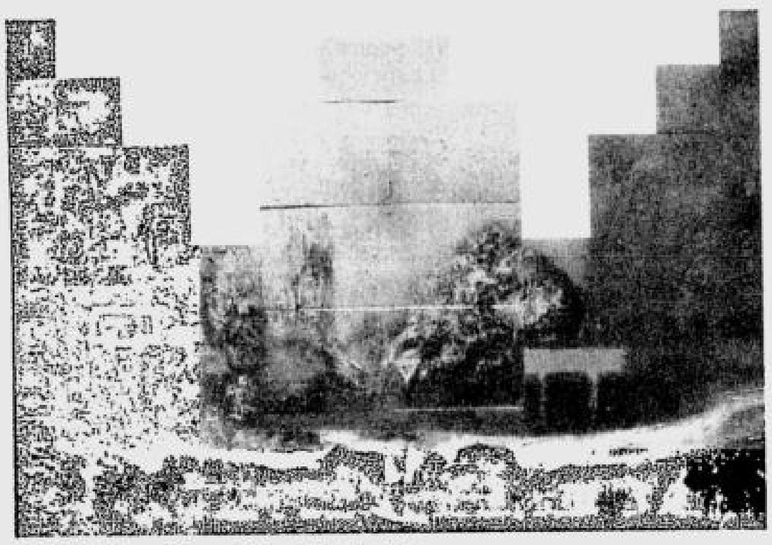
MAG:NET Gallery ABS features Carlo Angelo Saavedra's "Postcards from the End of the World" until May 14 at The Loop, ELJ Center, QC. Poignancy characterizes the artist's paintings. Marked by their brisk and frenetic handling and limited somber palette, they seem to boldly lash out the imperfections of depictive imagery in painting. Call 4100995.

JULIO Austria mounts his first solo exhibition, "Urban Jungle," on May 12-June 19 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Pasilyo Victorio Edades. Austria, who finished Fine Arts at University of Santo Tomas, translates the urban structure into simplified geometric figures converted into abstract forms, thereby commenting on the city's lack of cohesive planning, intelligent zoning, sound design and keen awareness of environment. Call 8323702.

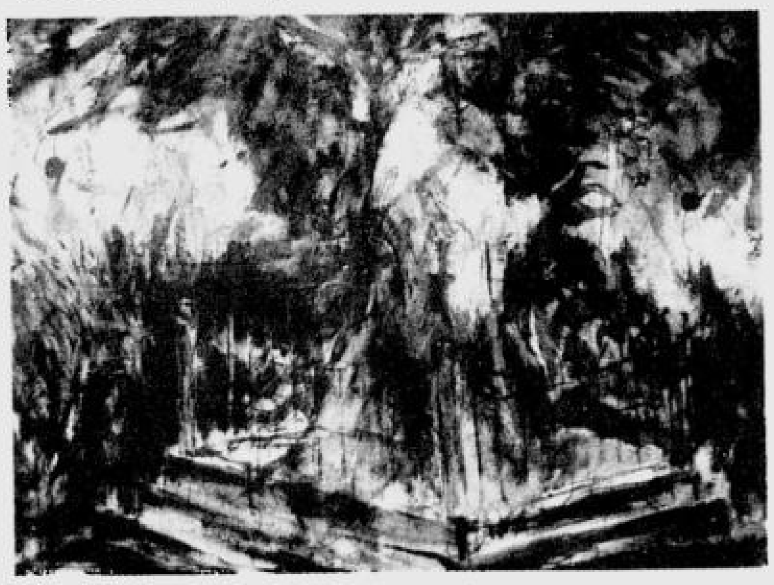
AN ORIENTAL flavor runs through the new works on paper of Roberto Robles. The series constitutes his latest one-man exhibit on May 5-29, at Galleria Duemila, 4/L, SM Megamall A. The works are largely monochromatic. Rich stone-gray and ink-black are dominant, with ochre as secondary hue. The artist combines calligraphy with gestural marks. Call 6343261, 8319990, 6336687 and 6343261.

"CROSSINGS: Philippine Works from the Singapore Art Museum" is an exhibition of 32 Philippine paintings from the permanent collection of the Singapore Art Museum. The selected works represent three critical periods in the country's development as a nation:

LEAÑO/ C7



"RUSH Hour Chaos," by Julio Austria



"THE CEMENT Garden," by Carlo Saavedra

'Lilo and Stitch' album tour at Ayala malls

CUTE little Hawaiian girl Lilo and her virtually indestructible lovable alien friend, Stitch, are back spreading the fun and laughter, in "Lilo's Summer Adventure," at the Ayala Malls this April and May.

Featuring music from Disney's "Lilo and Stitch Island Favorites Album," "Lilo's Summer Adventure" is especially written and conceptualized for Ayala Malls by stage director Freddie Santos, and stars GMA artists Bea Binene as Lilo, Chynna Ortaleza and Nadine Samonte alternating as Nani, Dion Ignacio and Tyrone Perez alternating as David, and Paul Salas as Daniel.

SOP Boys Emil and Yexel also will groove to tropical-flavored cuts from the album like "My Little Grass Shack," "We Make a Rainbow," "Love Me Tender," "Hawaiian Roller Coaster Ride" and many more.

Lilo and the gang will perform at the Alabang Town Center Activity Center on April 29-May 1, at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The adventure goes south to the Ayala Center Cebu Activity Center on May 6-8 at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

You may also catch the performances at the Market! Market! Activity Center on May 13, 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.; the Pavilion Mall New Parking Lot on May 14, 5 p.m.; and the Metropoint 2/F Activity Center on May 15, 6 p.m.

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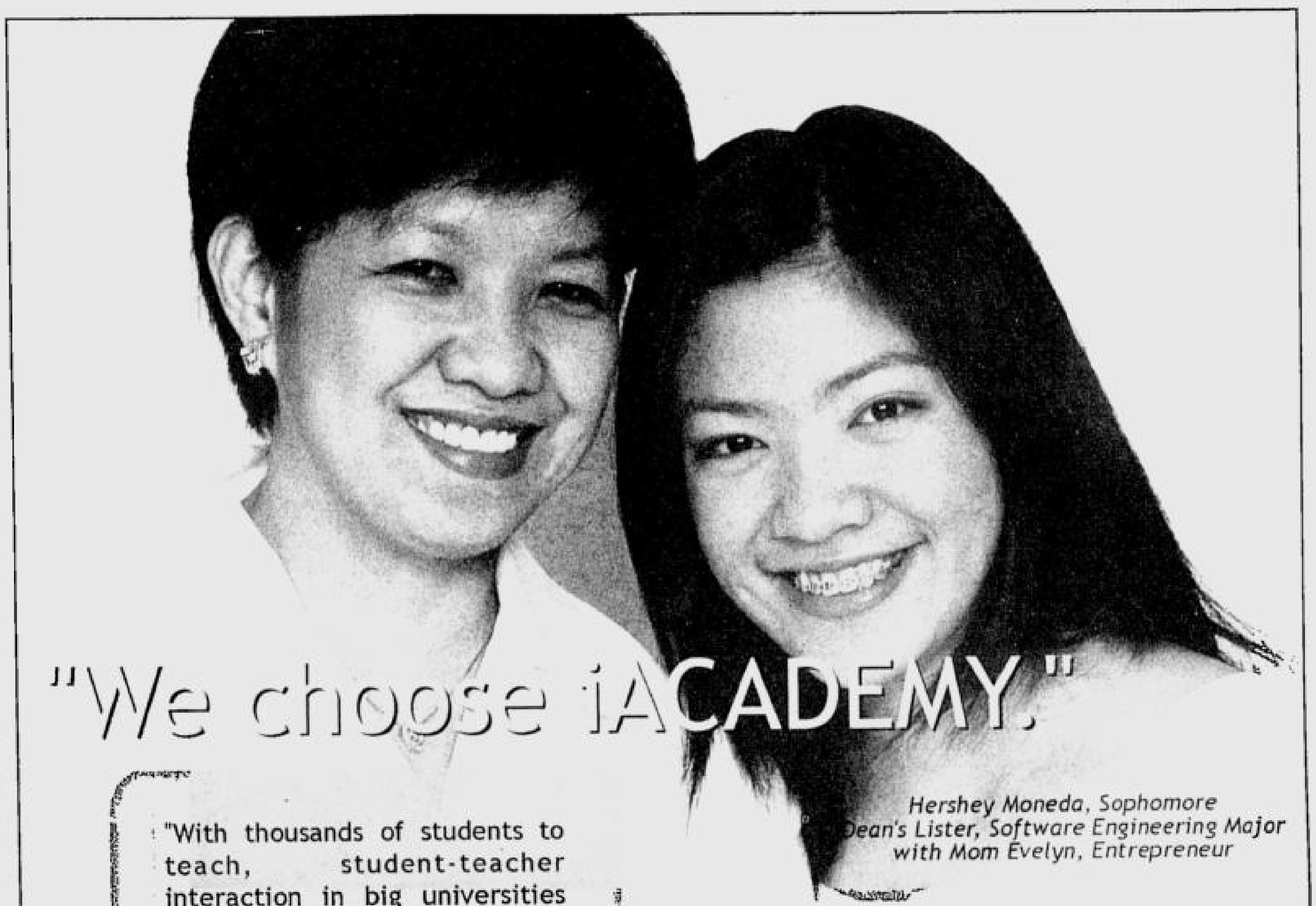

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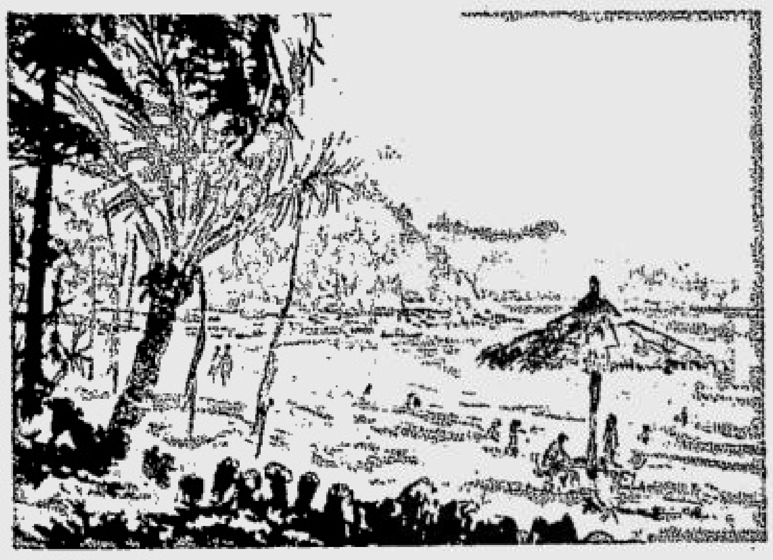

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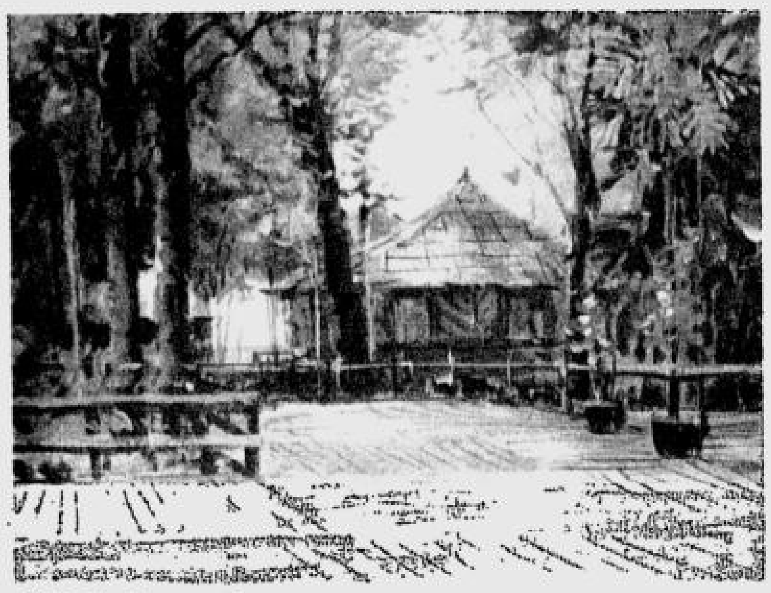

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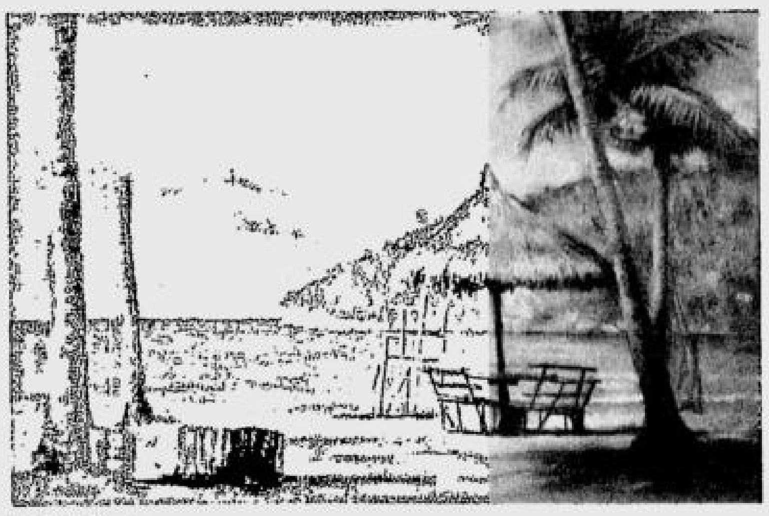

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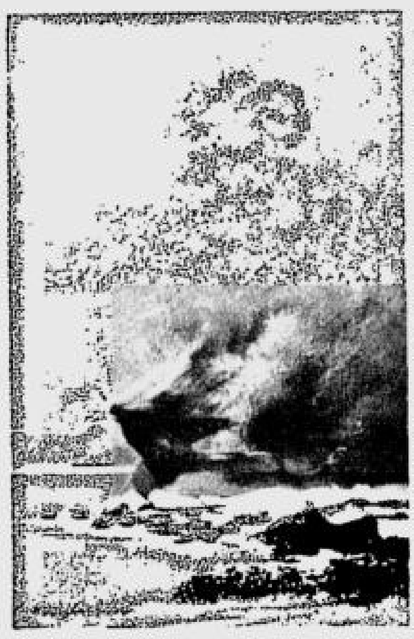
New haven for artists

By Constantino C. Tejero
Photos by Mitch Mauricio

MARIKINA has never been known as a cradle of artists. That's rather puzzling when, in fact, there may be more well-known artists per square meter in this place than in neighboring Rizal towns, say, Angono, where art is supposed to be a cottage industry.

Of older artists, Angono has only José Blanco, Antipolo has only Tam Austria and Nemiranda, while Marikina has Remy Boquiren, Mario Parial, Cris Cruz, Lydia Velasco, Abdulmari Imao.



ROLAND Santos

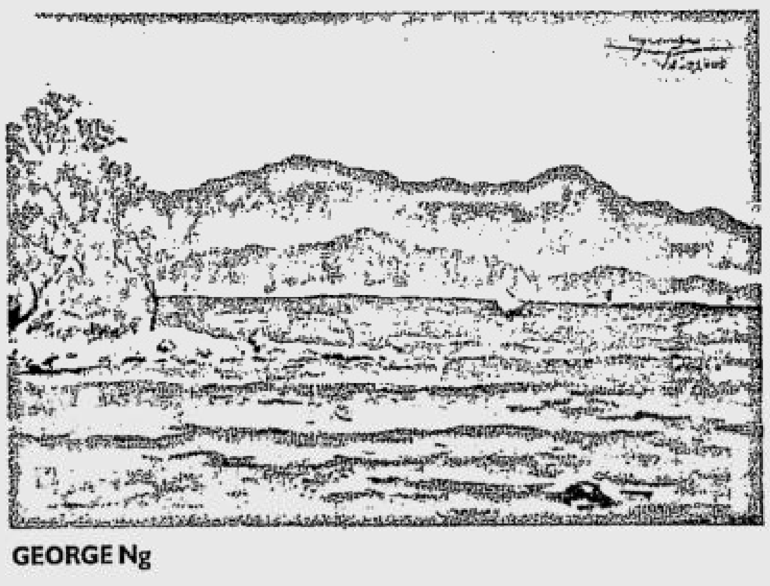
To correct that impression, a group of artists formed Kulay Marikina in January, with the primary aim of promoting Marikina as an artists' village, like Angono.

"Kung tutuusin, mas maraming sikat na artists *ang taga-*Marikina *kaysa* Angono *ngayon,"* says watercolorist Roland Santos, the group's vice president.

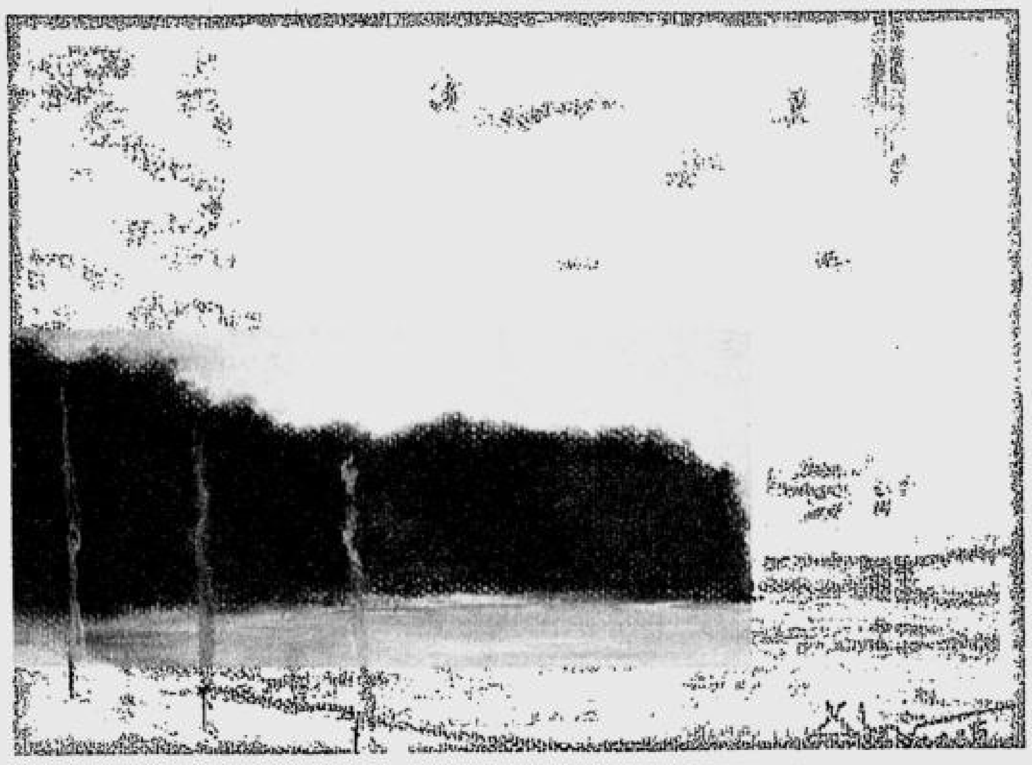
Kulay Marikina has some 30 members. The core group includes its president Velasco, Santos, Boquiren, Cruz, Ben Infante, Andy Urag, Melencio Sapnu, Shiela Tiangco, Honey Banal, Paul Escobañas.

They have found a permanent venue for their sessions in Marikina Hotel, where they meet every Friday at 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Recently they held a summer art workshop there.

They also hold exhibitions at the hotel lobby, with one on the subject of flowers ongoing until next week. Next month they're putting up another show, on the theme of women on canvas.



GEORGE Ng



BY ANDY Urag

ROLAND Santos, Andy Pernia, Bong Gojar, Andy Urag, Tam Urao, Luis Gabriel; (second row) George Ng, Honey Banal, Ben Infante, Remy Boquiren, Ernie Patricio, Melvyn Martin, Shiela Tiangco, Bing Siochi, Mon Cañeza.

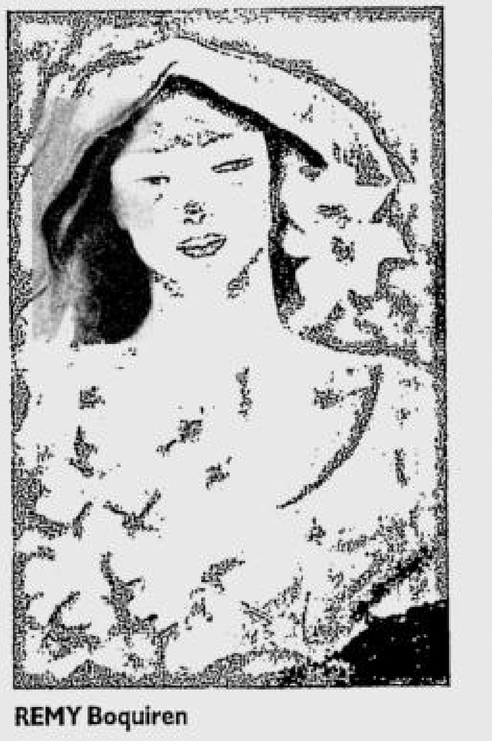
Publicity and inspiration

Though the local government is supportive of artists in terms of venue for their art and activities, Santos says they still can't count on it for publicity and marketing.

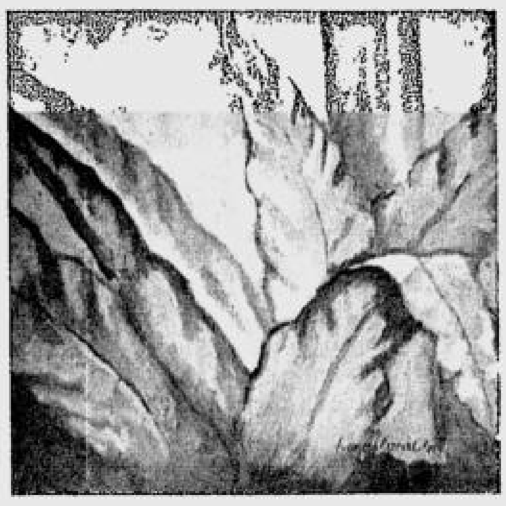
"Our main problem is marketing," he continues. "Also, awareness about art among Mariqueños. Art is not at the highest level with them. A painting at P5,000 *namamahalan na sila.*"

Clearly this new art group needs all the support it can get. So when an invitation to an art activity was extended by Cala Paniman, Inc. last week, 14 from the group were only too eager to go. The venue was the 21-ha Cresta Grande subdivision project at Puerto Azul in Ternate, Cavite.

The idea was to hold on-the-spot painting sessions in the future resort community, portraying its views of sea and forested hills, nature trails, bird species, flora and fauna. It was meant to be symbiotic: The artists could draw inspiration from the place, and Cresta Grande would get publicity through art.



REMY Boquiren



HONEY Banal

In early afternoon, after coasting around from one inlet to another, from clubhouse to golf course, from promontories to ravines, the artists took their choices of vistas, angles and perspectives and started limning the natural world until sunset.

Early the following morning, some still rushed to the porch facing the bay to catch the quality of light at sunrise.

The resultant pieces are interesting in the variety of subjects and styles or even in the differences in interpretations of the same subjects. The preferred subject is the sea, then the cottages and cabanas.

Some, however, focus on the leaves and flowers abounding in the nature reserve: aerial plants, bird's-nest fern, bird-of-paradise, *siete palmas, kalachuchi.*

Still life and landscape

The preferred medium is pastel. It was just practical as it was the easiest to carry around in such a trip as this. George Ng started a piece in oil but didn't finish it, and came up with a lovely monochromatic watercolor seascape instead.

Luis Gabriel, who also did watercolor pieces, said the water in the area was salty so it had a flat effect in the rendering of watercolor. We don't know if both used bottled mineral water instead.

There is no abstract piece, except for Mon Cañeza's luminous washes melting into near-abstraction. Most of the pieces are impressionistic in their treatment of landscape, as is only natural.

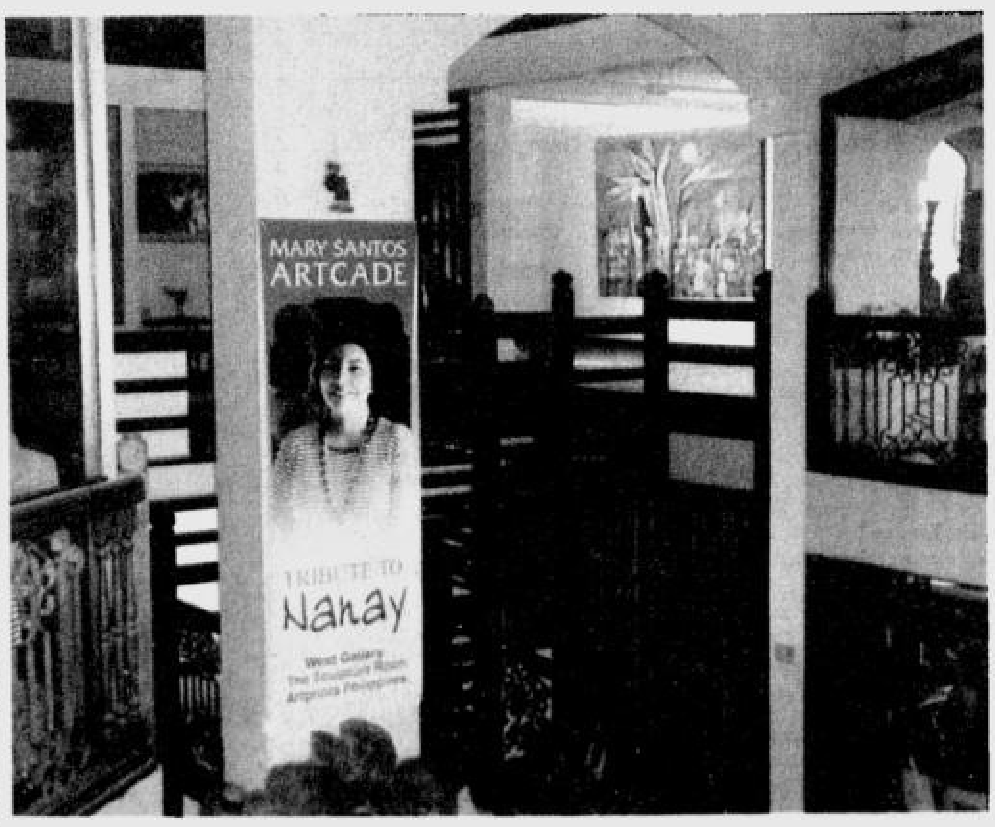
We notice that only the men do landscape, while the women prefer still life and genre painting. Why are there only a few female landscapists? Is it innate in female nature? Is it natural to male temperament?

Anyway, the genre portrait in soft pastel by Boquiren, the floral still life in watercolor by Tiangco, and the foliage in oil pastel by Banal are among the loveliest on display—and they can certainly hold their own side by side with the men's landscapes and seascapes.

The men may have found an entire universe in the link of horizon and shore, water and sky, but the women prefer to see the world in a grain of sand.

Someone from Cala Paniman, Inc. says they're planning to hold an exhibit of these artworks. So publicity and marketing for both Kulay Marikina and Cresta Grande are halfway solved. (God works in mysterious ways.)

Building memorializes Malang's greatest love



HOME for original Filipino artworks

THE BUILDING used to be called Marisan, a play on the name of artist Malang's late wife, Mary Santos. It housed the family-run West Gallery and Artprints Philippines, as well as the studios of Malang and those of his sons, Soler and Stevesantos, and daughter-in-law Mona.

Malang and Mary managed the artist's space since the 1970s. When she died, Malang sought to renovate it.

Malang also envisioned separate exhibition spaces for sculpture, drawings and art prints.

On March 1, Mary's diamond birthday anniversary, the new Mary Santos Artcade in Quezon City opened with an aptly titled exhibit, "Tribute to Nanay."

Malang presented his newest collection at the newly refurbished West Gallery, now on the second floor.

Among Malang's favorite subjects have been women, and he couldn't be more fulfilled after dedicating this latest exhibit (and the whole art venue) to the love of his life.

MARY Santos Artcade lobby

Across West Gallery are the Sculpture Room and Artprints Philippines.

Other artists featured in the inaugural exhibit were BenCab, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Arturo Luz, Ramon Orlina and Eduardo Castrillo.

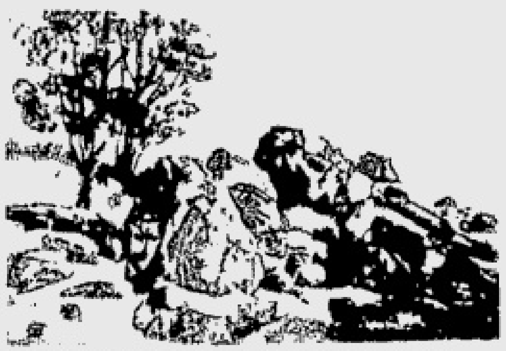
Selected sculptures of Juan Alcazaren, Pete Jimenez, José and Jordan Mendoza, Dan Raralio and Reggie Yuson were also on view.

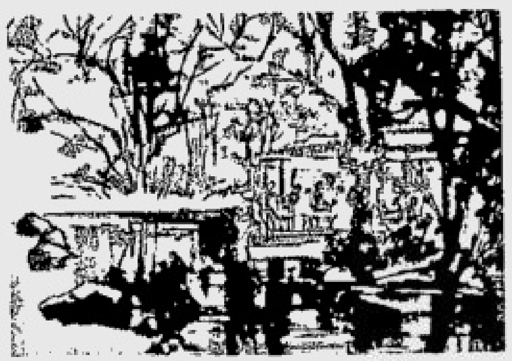
On hand at the opening were Quezon City Rep. Vincent Crisologo and his wife, UP Vargas Museum's Ana Labrador, columnist Neal Cruz, sculptor Ramon Orlina, pastor Danny Perez, Ces and Fe Rodriguez, Aurora Go, Juan T. Gatbonton, artist and art critic Cid Reyes and Finale Art File's Vita Sarenas and Sylvia Gascon.

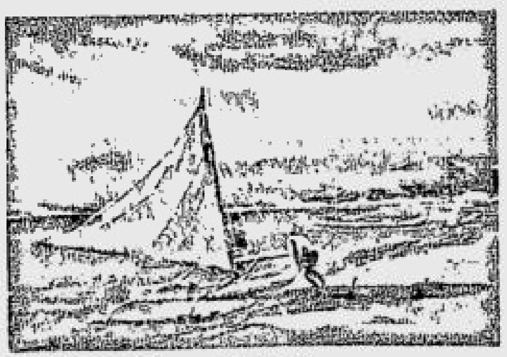
Construction is ongoing on the other floors, which will feature artist studios and workshop rooms.

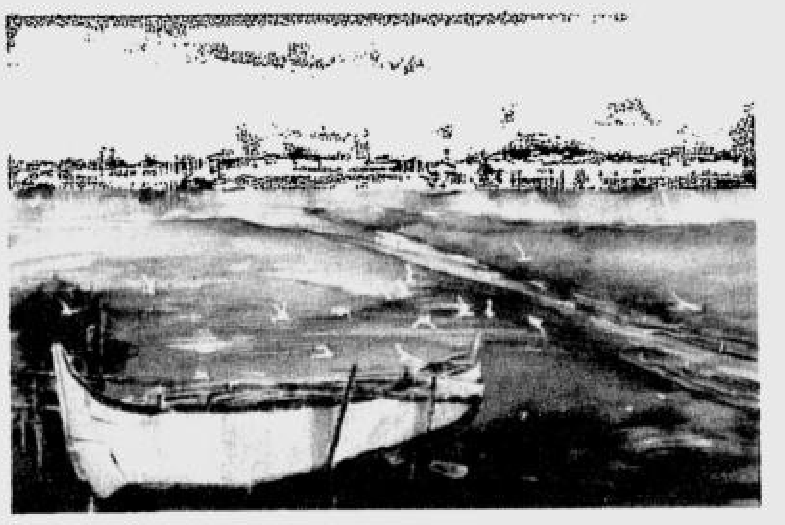
A portion of the area will be leased to other establishments in line with the artcade's concept to become a home for original Filipino works of art.

Mary Santos Artcade is at 48 West Ave., Quezon City. Call 4119221 or 4110336.


"NATURE'S Rock at Puerto Galera," by Rafael Cusi Jr.


"RIZAL Park Orchidarium," by Cusi


"MINDORO Scene," by Cusi


"BACLAYAN Scene," by Cusi

Drawings from life

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE NOTION that drawing is less demanding than painting is rather inaccurate and misguided. It can be easily debunked, considering the stringent standards artists uniformly apply when creating.

A staunch disciple of drawing is Rafael Cusi Jr., a master of watercolor. In his long and rewarding practice, Cusi has pushed drawing well beyond its boundaries, pursuing it not merely as a respite from his painting. And all these years, he has collected well over 500 black-and-white drawings, mainly in India ink and charcoal on paper.

To mount his collection in several venues across the country, all Cusi had to do was take the drawings, some dating back to the '70s, out of the drawer and have them framed.

The artist has continually explored the theme of nature's bounty with the most expressive means at his command. It is hardly surprising that the collection boasts of powerfully alluring images of tropical beauty—sun-dappled beaches and swaying palm fronds, lush wild vegetation, still life, images that highlight the elemental light and shadow, quintessential black and white.

Worthy

Equally prominent are the nudes, mainly female figures, from famous celebrities to nameless models. While Cusi may modestly confess he is no punctilious portraitist, the nudes are worthy of a viewer's rapt attention.

Cusi is clearly more enamored with the body's sculptural qualities, highlighting the well-articulated sculptural contours and betraying a postmodern twist through gestures and the most animated poses.

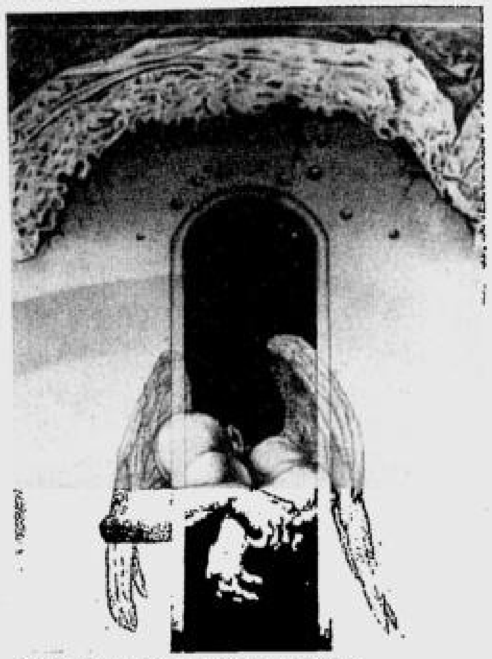
The nudes are a virtual gallery of human emotions, betrayed in bodies standing, sitting, reclining, in odalisque position, several faces partly shown, totally cropped or deliberately shrouded. The artist avoids taking detours, resisting the easy way out by repeating standard imagery that other artists, lured by easy bucks, do.

Though several nude drawings simply focus on the physical form, others are, in pastel and with totally massed backgrounds, delineated in a three-dimensional mode, the play of contrasts creating depth, volume and a sense of dynamism.

Some scenes are inspired by the artist's frequent jaunts abroad, his sense of wanderlust satiated with sketches of palaces and their interiors, promenades, plazas and other places. Cusi's style is discernible even in sketches that combine intimacy with monumentality, like those of the cavernous edifices in Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Intuitive

Born in Bongabon, Oriental Mindoro, and educated at the Philippine Women's University, where he earned his degree in Fine Arts and was an outstanding student, Cusi has an intuitive style reflecting a contemporary sensibility. This is evident in his drawing which, as this collection amply proves, reveals a masterly control of both medium and its innate potential to bring out the salient aspects of his subject.


"ALAPAAP," by Salvador Ching

The drawings possess a special quality that sets him apart. With his unyielding imagination, a robust and vigorous style, the drawings combine life and art, animated by his pursuit of pleasures, hedonistic and divine. Cusi's art strikes deep into the realm of the imagination.

The pre-departure show of Cusi, Fidel Sarmiento (president of the Art Association of the Philippines) and Buds Convocar (Saturday Group president) at the Renaissance Art Gallery ends today.

> Cusi has pushed drawing well beyond its boundaries, pursuing it not merely as a respite from his painting

The show, "Schengen Exhibit," will go on a tour in Berlin, Germany (Hotel Intercontinental, May 2-8); Belgium (Stedelijk Wereldcentrum, Brugge, May 12-14); Paris, France (Philippine Embassy, May 16-17); Luxembourg (May 18-20); and The Hague, Netherlands (May 22-23).

Closing

Meanwhile, "Purga" at The Big & Small Art Co., SM Megamall, showcasing the recent works in pencil and acrylic of Salvador Ching, a much younger artist who is also fascinated with drawing, ends today.

Ching describes the show as a self-interpretation of life, its pains and struggles and dreams; an unbroken montage of images combining symbolic objects and subconscious figures culled from his dreams and memories.

A performance artist, Ching had his flowing hair shaved by friend Sherwin Ramos during the opening of the show. Clumps of his excised hair were dangled from a rope as part of the purging process. He inscribed a statement in Filipino on a plastic sheet to reiterate his chosen theme, which approximates the detoxification ritual.

Ching's show included his entry at the mixed-media category of the last AAP Annual. Called "Patibong," an installation is made of *pili* nuts and giant *gugo* fibers fashioned into a cocoon.

The other pieces, also in browns and beiges, are introspective in mood, muted in composition, a deeply psychological outpouring by an artist moving closer to his artistic nirvana.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com.

PHILAM PLANS to pay P574 million in benefits in '05!

Philam Plans, the country's leading pre-need company, fulfills its commitment to its valued planholders!

A grand total of P574 million in cash benefits will be paid out by Philam Plans this year to the delight of thousands of parents, who all dream of a guaranteed education for their children, and thousands other Filipinos, who all sought a comfortable future for themselves and their families.

As early as April of this year, the first tranche of P87 million in education benefits will be paid directly to more than 8,000 students all over the country. Philam Plans will issue manager's checks, which is as good as cash, to ensure the complete peace of mind of its beloved planholders.

Philam Plans is likewise set to provide the security of its over 3,000 pension planholders, who will receive a total of P331 million in pension benefits this year.

As the leading pre-need company that enjoys financial strength and stability, Philam Plans provides the much-needed financial liquidity and peace of mind during these difficult and trying times.

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Philam Plans is proud of its P15.3 billion trust fund as of March 2005, the largest in the industry to date. Its trust fund investment portfolio is highly liquid-ensuring the company the flexibility to meet any and all eventualities. The fund is put under safe and liquid investments such as government securities and near cash investments that guarantees substantial long-term yields, allowing Philam Plans to fulfill all its current and future commitments.

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Philam Plans draws its strength from its mother company Philamlife, the undisputed leader in insurance in the country. It carries the Philam name, which for almost 60 years has connoted stability, strength and unbroken commitment to its customers and the public at large.

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From all walks of life, all over the country, Philam is the name that Filipinos trust wholeheartedly.

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Now in its 16th year of serving the pre-need requirements of Filipinos, Philam Plans continues to stand by its unblemished record of keeping and fulfilling its promises to planholders-the cornerstone of its business.

Professionally run and quality driven, Philam Plans seeks to become the standard of excellence and integrity in pre-need by constantly improving its services.

Today, Philam Plans continues to reach out to more Filipinos through innovative and best-selling pre-need products with superior features and benefits such as the Future Fund pension plans, the Gold education plans and the Ultima life plan. Its new affordable products in pension, Pangarap, and education, Pangako, provide the same security of benefits but at a cost within reach of most Filipinos.

Sa Philam Plans, Panatag ka. Noon, ngayon at sa hinaharap.

Pangako ko,
kinabukasan mo
PHILAM PLANS
Pangako
Education Plan

Edukasyon ang tunay na kayamanang mabibigay mo sa kanya. **Sa Philam Plans Pangako Education Plan**, sigurado ka na may pamana ka para sa kinabukasan niya!

Ang **Pangako Education Plan** ay:

Abot-kaya. Sa P40 lang bawat araw, kasyang-kasya ito sa budget mo!

Mapagkakatiwalaan. May siguradong educational funds na mabibigay sa iyong anak para matupad ang ambisyon niya!

Sigurado. Ang Philam Plans ay suportado ng **Philam Life**, ang No. 1 insurance company sa Pilipinas, at **AIG**, isa sa pinakamalaking financial services company sa buong mundo!

Ito ang pangako sa pamilya mo ng PHILAM PLANS. Para makasiguro ka sa edukasyon ng anak mo, **tumawag agad sa 5285-2001**

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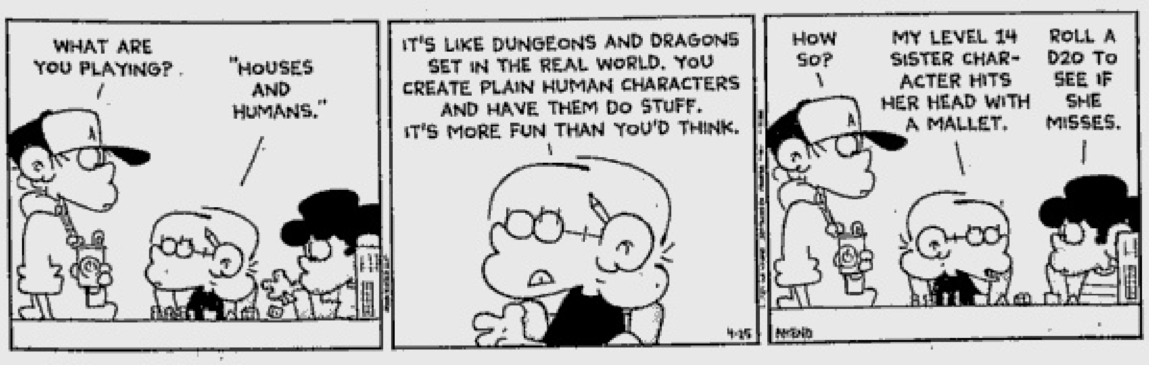
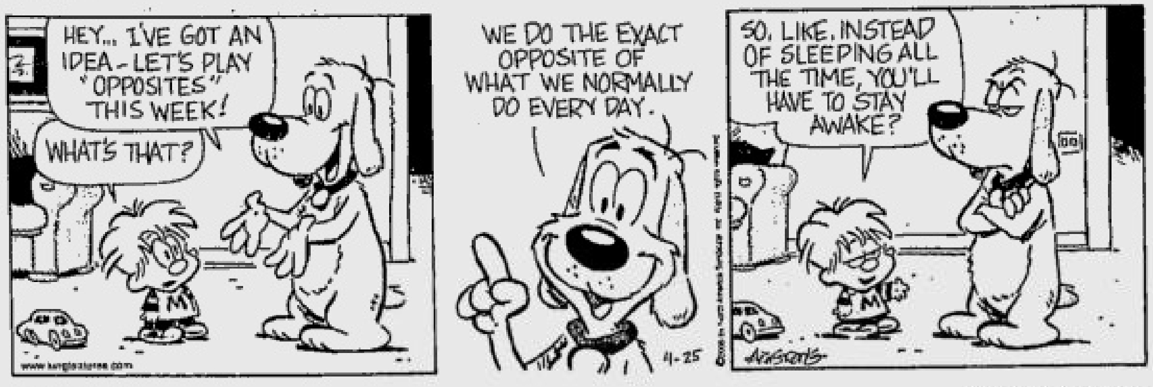
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING?
"HOUSES AND HUMANS."
IT'S LIKE DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS SET IN THE REAL WORLD. YOU CREATE PLAIN HUMAN CHARACTERS AND HAVE THEM DO STUFF. IT'S MORE FUN THAN YOU'D THINK.
HOW SO?
MY LEVEL 14 SISTER CHARACTER HITS HER HEAD WITH A MALLET.
ROLL A D20 TO SEE IF SHE MISSES.
4-25

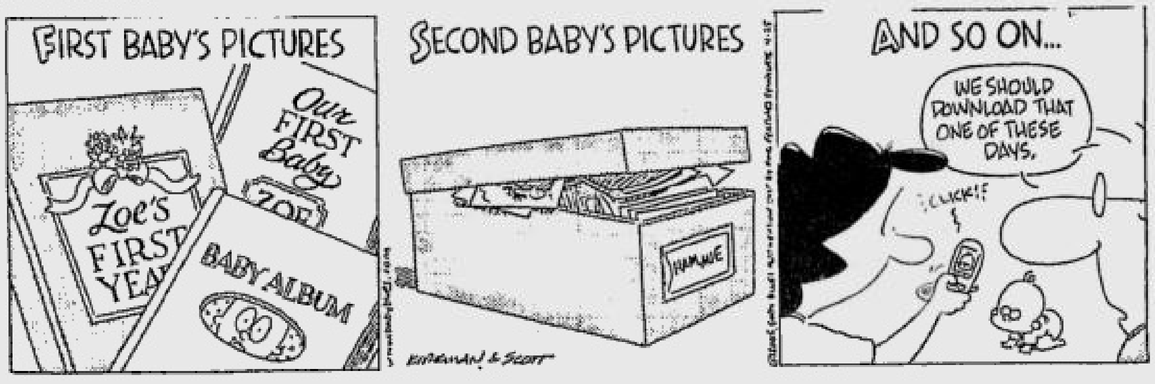
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


HEY... I'VE GOT AN IDEA - LET'S PLAY "OPPOSITES" THIS WEEK!
WHAT'S THAT?
WE DO THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF WHAT WE NORMALLY DO EVERY DAY.
SO, LIKE, INSTEAD OF SLEEPING ALL THE TIME, YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY AWAKE?
4-25

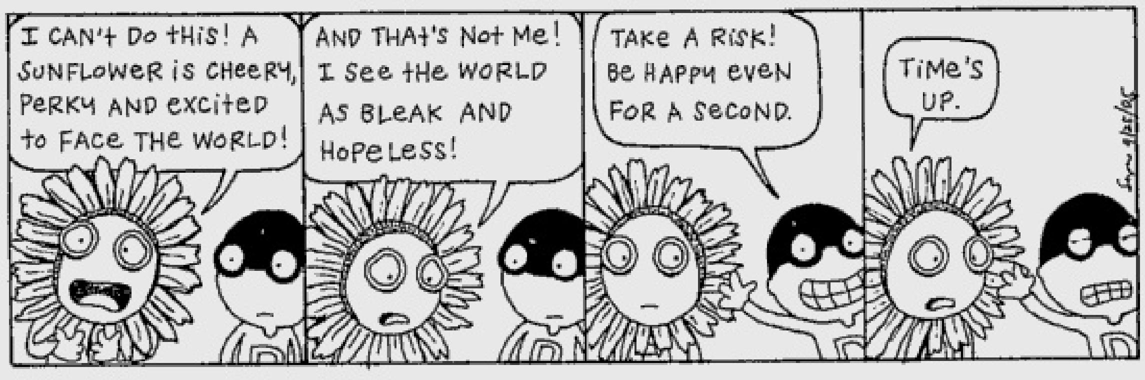
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


FIRST BABY'S PICTURES
Our FIRST Baby
ZOE
Zoe's FIRST YEAR
BABY ALBUM
SECOND BABY'S PICTURES
HAMMIE
AND SO ON...
WE SHOULD DOWNLOAD THAT ONE OF THESE DAYS.
CLICK!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I CAN'T DO THIS! A SUNFLOWER IS CHEERY, PERKY AND EXCITED TO FACE THE WORLD!
AND THAT'S NOT ME! I SEE THE WORLD AS BLEAK AND HOPELESS!
TAKE A RISK! BE HAPPY EVEN FOR A SECOND.
TIME'S UP.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are hardworking and dedicated. You have a relentless, vigorous steadfastness. You're very active and intense because you have a strong constitution and a strong personality as well. You like to travel. You like the good things in life. An important area of your life will wrap up this year to make room for something new.
Birthdate of: Hank Azaria, actor; Renée Zellweger, actress; Al Pacino, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Money problems that have plagued you recently seem to diminish now. What worried you yesterday seems to be much less important today. (You're putting things in perspective.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It's been a bit dicey lately with partners and close friends. Just be patient. You'll be back on a firm footing very soon.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Cooperation from co-workers is more forthcoming today. (And it will even improve in the immediate future.) If you expect the best from others, they're much more inclined to give it!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Tension with friends seems to have lessened considerably today. This makes life easier and more pleasant. You're very sensitive; you like to get along with others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Continue to be patient with bosses and parents. You will not regret it. Even as you read these words, things are getting better. (And you know it.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Travel plans that appeared to be delayed or blocked might now be back in the picture. Take a positive attitude about this. Travel for pleasure is a strong possibility now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Cozy relationships can become even cozier. Your affection for someone is deepening. This is important to you because you are one sign who likes to have someone on the other end of your teeter-totter.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Yesterday's Full Moon in your sign might have tested some relationships. Keep your cool. The tension is now in the past. You have to know what to keep and what to let go of.

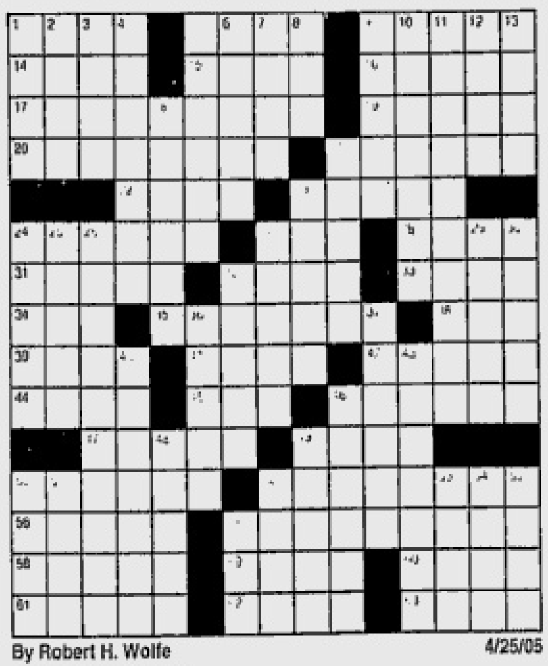
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Capitalize on your strong urge to get organized now. While the feeling is with you, get as much done as you possibly can. (It's much easier to do something when you want to do it.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Financial speculation is favored now. This is also an excellent time to go on a vacation. The arts, creative activities and playful times with children will delight you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Entertain at home, and enjoy good times with family members now. Many of you will notice improvements in your health at this time.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Enjoy good times with siblings now. This is a wonderful time to patch up misunderstandings with anybody—relatives, neighbors and daily contacts.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

4/25/05

ACROSS
1 Peal
5 Pedro's house
9 Jack who ate no fat
14 Ron Howard role
15 Many years
16 Use a scale
17 Criminals' policy platform?
19 Boredom
20 Party conservatives
21 Emblems
22 Nile bird
23 Muslim women's quarters
24 Wards off
27 You there!
28 "Peter Pan" pet
31 Japanese porcelain
32 Gram or rail lead-in
33 Old ruler
34 Varnish ingredient
35 Rowers' reduction?
38 Spasm
39 Enjoy
41 Archipelago member
42 Advil rival
44 Bridge coup
45 CIA forerunner
46 Terrified
47 Dapper
49 5th Avenue store
50 Enlaces
52 Poe story, "The __ Heart"
56 Chart anew
57 Flea on kittens?
58 Seething
59 Adams or Brickell
60 Gymnast Korbut
61 Fracas
62 See after
63 Uninvited plant

DOWN
1 African nation
2 October stone
3 The Swedish Nightingale
4 More long-shanked
5 French port
6 Thickening agents
7 E-mail button
8 Inquire
9 Take an oath
10 Supported from above
11 Mafia don?
12 Chills and fever
13 "__ Gun for Hire"
18 Open to all
21 Wetlands passage
23 From this place
24 Lunar valleys
25 Messages by computer
26 Wolf?
27 Cries loudly
29 Gullible
30 Bowed
32 Disorderly
36 Public disturbances
37 Take on or take down
40 Send forth
43 Final line of seats
46 Like some nuts
48 Native American dwelling
49 Become established
50 Neat and tidy
51 Existed
52 Ocean motion
53 Competent
54 Sport sled
55 Mild oath
57 Allow to

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

R	E	A	D	Y	I	N	G	■	C	L	I	M	E	S
E	N	D	E	A	V	O	R	■	L	E	V	I	N	E
S	T	O	C	K	A	D	E	■	A	V	E	S	T	A
H	I	R	E	■	Y	E	A	H	M	I	S	S	E	S
A	C	I	N	G	■	S	T	E	M	S	■	I	N	T
P	E	N	N	E	D	■	E	P	I	■	B	E	T	A
E	D	G	I	E	R	■	R	A	N	■	U	S	E	R
■	■	■	U	K	E	S	■	Y	E	L	P	■	■	■
H	A	H	N	■	A	H	A	■	S	O	P	H	I	A
O	L	E	S	■	M	A	G	■	S	O	L	O	N	G
P	B	A	■	D	I	R	A	C	■	M	I	N	C	E
P	A	C	K	A	N	I	M	A	L	■	C	O	I	L
I	N	H	A	L	E	■	A	L	A	C	A	R	T	E
S	I	E	V	E	S	■	N	O	M	I	N	E	E	S
H	A	R	A	S	S	■	T	R	E	A	T	E	R	S

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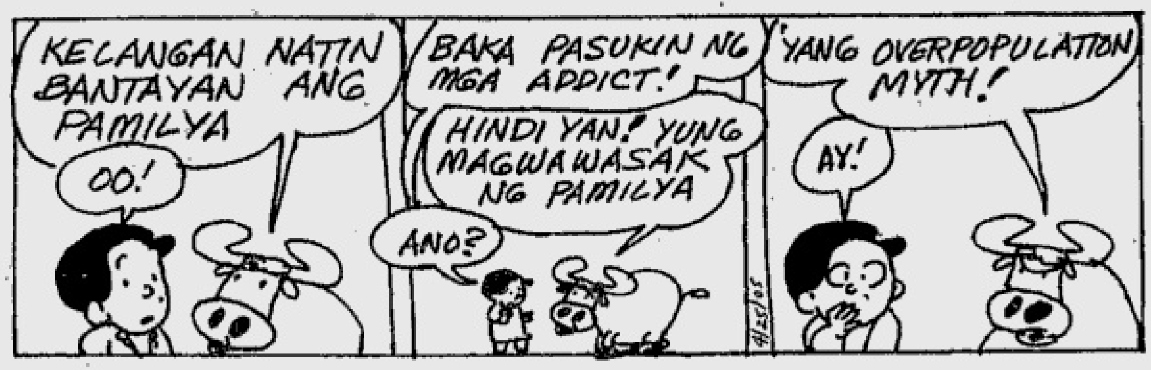
4/25/05

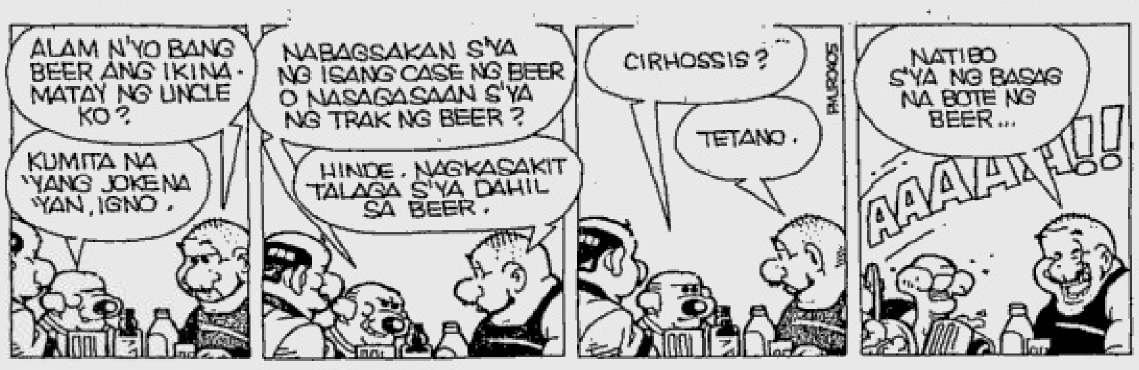
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KELANGAN NATIN BANTAYAN ANG PAMILYA
OO!
BAKA PASUKIN NG MGA ADDICT!
HINDI YAN! YUNG MAGWAWASAK NG PAMILYA
ANO?
'YANG OVERPOPULATION MYTH!
AY!
4/25/05

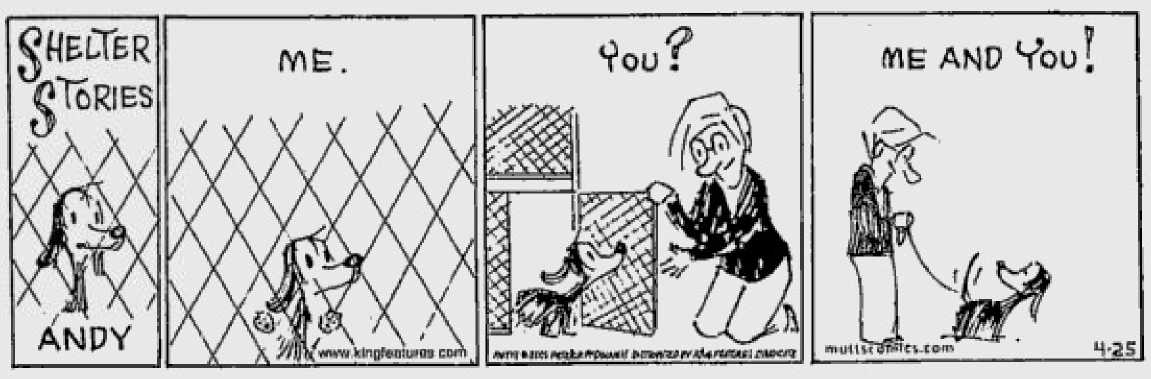
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM N'YO BANG BEER ANG IKINAMATAY NG UNCLE KO?
KUMITA NA 'YANG JOKE NA 'YAN, IGNO.
NABAGSAKAN S'YA NG ISANG CASE NG BEER O NASAGASAAN S'YA NG TRAK NG BEER?
HINDE. NAGKASAKIT TALAGA S'YA DAHIL SA BEER.
CIRHOSSIS?
TETANO.
NATIBO S'YA NG BASAG NA BOTE NG BEER...
AAAAH!!!

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL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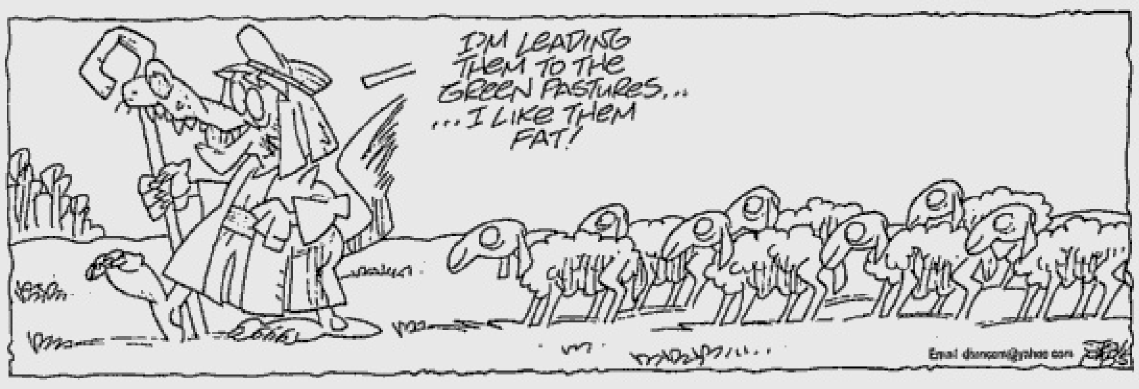
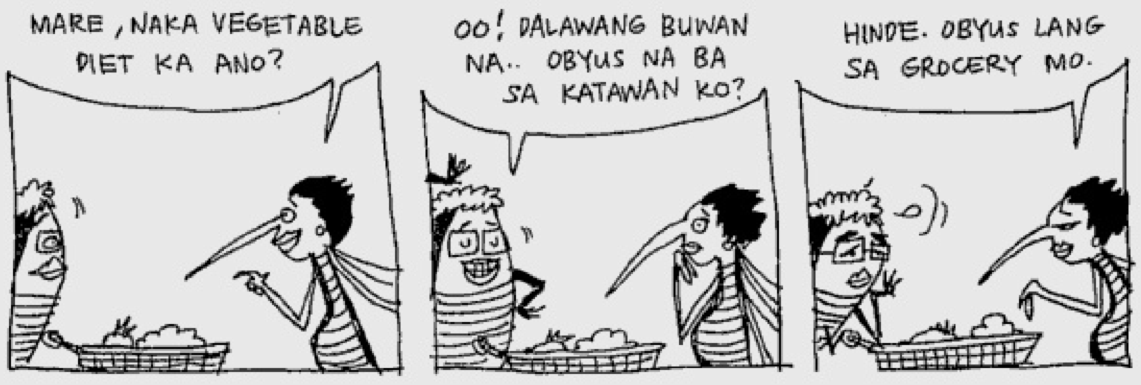
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I'M LEADING THEM TO THE GREEN PASTURES... ...I LIKE THEM FAT!

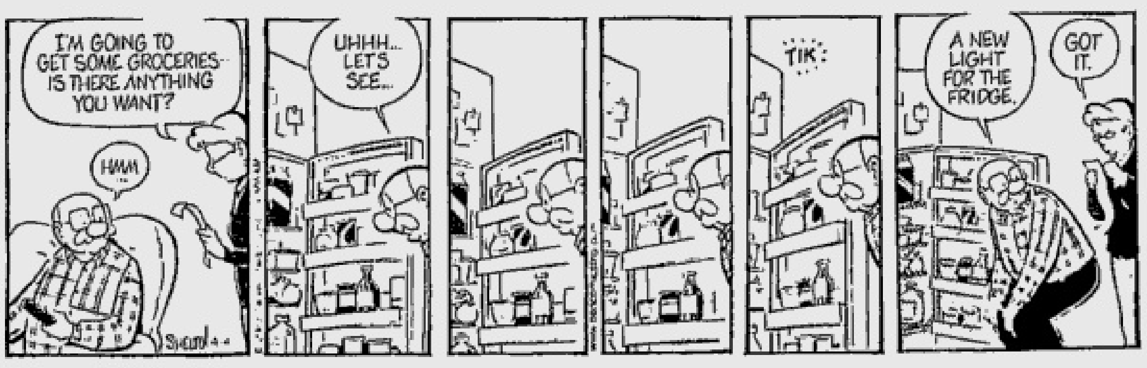
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MARE, NAKA VEGETABLE DIET KA ANO?
OO! DALAWANG BUWAN NA.. OBYUS NA BA SA KATAWAN KO?
HINDE. OBYUS LANG SA GROCERY MO.

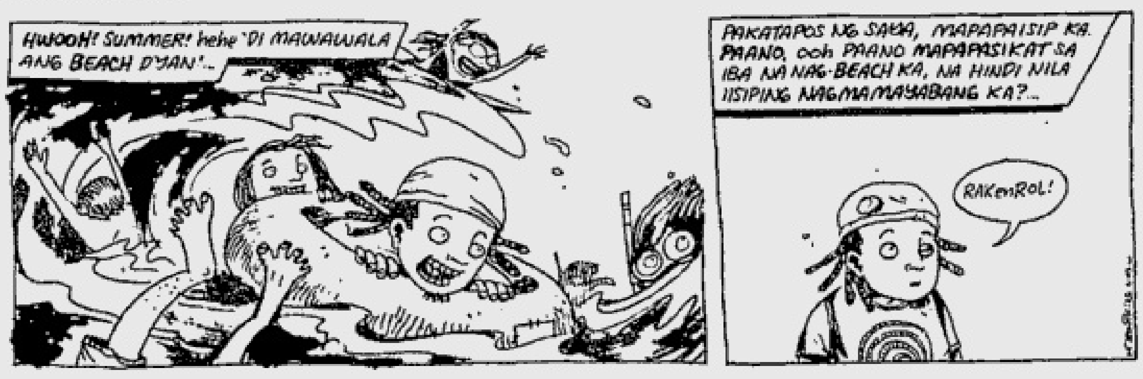
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I'M GOING TO GET SOME GROCERIES. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT?
HMM
UHHH... LET'S SEE...
TIK!
A NEW LIGHT FOR THE FRIDGE.
GOT IT.

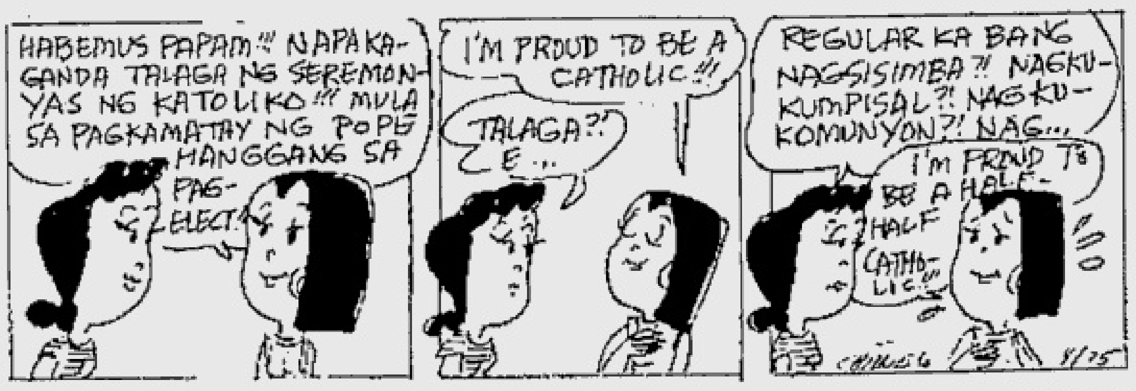
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! SUMMER! hehe 'DI MAWAWALA ANG BEACH D'YAN'...
PAKATAPOS NG SAYA, MAPAPAISIP KA. PAANO, ooh PAANO MAPAPASIKAT SA IBA NA NAG-BEACH KA, NA HINDI NILA IISIPING NAGMAMAYABANG KA?...
RAKenROL!

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HABEMUS PAPAM!!! NAPAKAGANDA TALAGA NG SEREMONYAS NG KATOLIKO!!! MULA SA PAGKAMATAY NG POPE HANGGANG SA PAG-ELECT!
I'M PROUD TO BE A CATHOLIC!!!
TALAGA?! E...
REGULAR KA BANG NAGSISIMBA?! NAGKUKUMPISAL?! NAGKUKOMUNYON?! NAG...
I'M PROUD TO BE A HALF-HALF CATHOLIC!!
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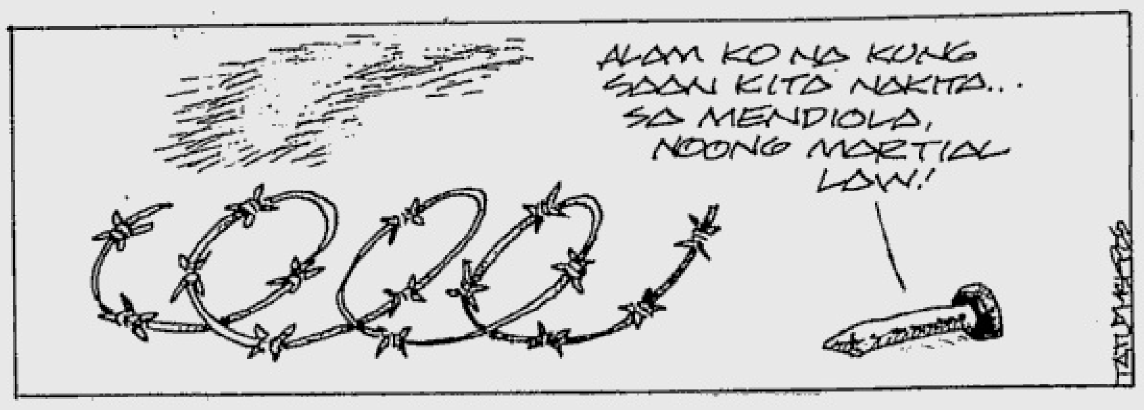
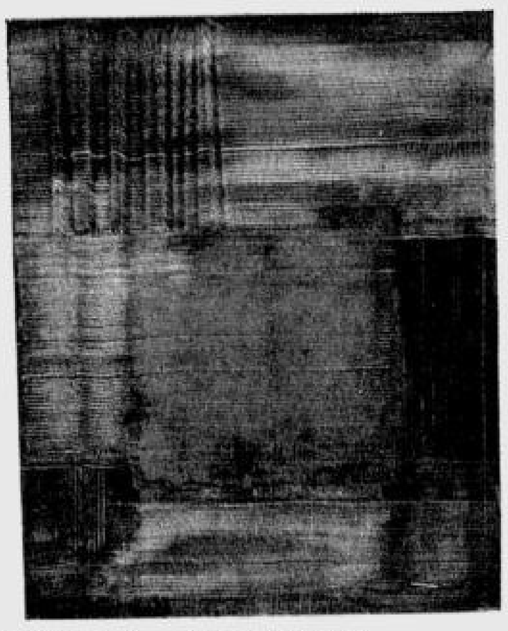
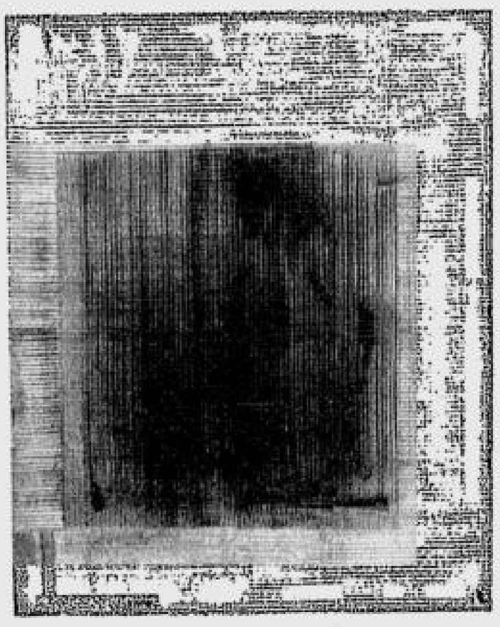
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

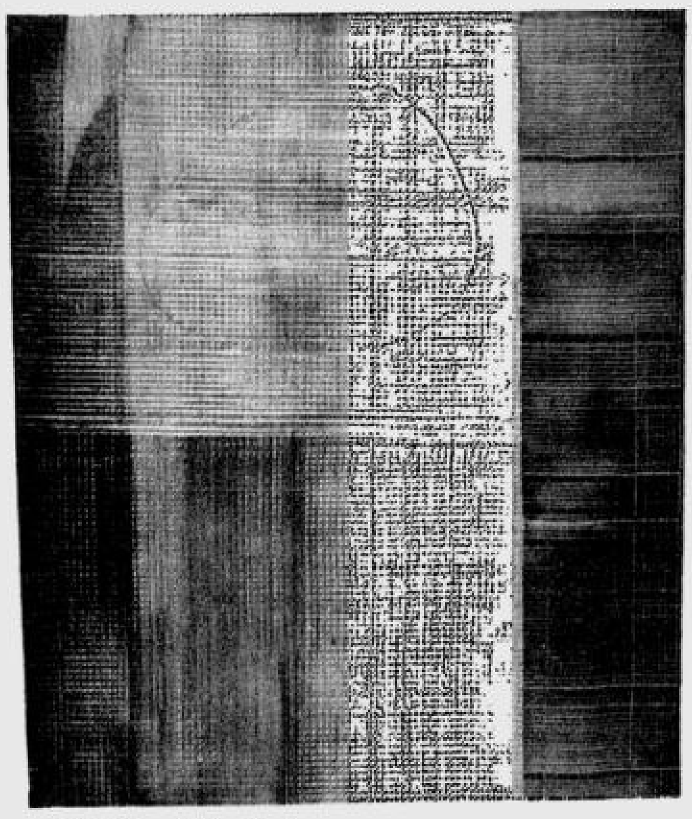

ALAM KO NA KUNG SAAN KITA NAKITA... SA MENDIOLA, NOONG MARTIAL LAW!


"RED Sky through My Window"


"SILHOUETTE"

Known for big works, the abstract artist underwhelms and gets cozy in a new show

"MOON Hiding"


"SUNSET and Blue Sky"

Lito Carating gets friendly

From page C8

became a popular hobby, as well as taken on mythological creatures.

At an upcoming exhibit in Cena Café and Restaurant, organized with Hiraya Gallery, he continues with the style he began five years ago: overlapping layers of metallic acrylic colors executed in calming horizontal and vertical brushstrokes. This look was inspired by a detail from works he showed in the Spanish cities of Madrid and Valencia.

"I got the inspiration after seeing the landscape of Spain from the plane," he says.

Opera singer

Unknown to many, low-profile Carating was a full-time opera singer before concentrating on being an artist.

"I wanted to satisfy the exhibitionist in me by performing in public," he jokes.

He stopped singing when his twin sister passed away in 1981. "I saw how my British brother-in-law made my sister, who was in a coma, listen to classical music to help her heal. Since then, I've identified classical music and operas with the passing of my twin."

These days, he says, "music is confined to my painting."

Carating, who has been painting for more than 30 years, says he still maintains the discipline of a young artist. He begins work at 5:30 a.m., listening to music from an old transistor radio. He paints the whole day.

"It's a complete ceremony just to bring out paraphernalia and pigments," he says.

"I am a very impatient artist," he declares. "I think, for anyone, as long as you know the technique already, you can do it with eyes closed. But this is not mass-producing. I'm just very sure about my work."

"Small Works At Cena" opens on April 27 and continues for three weeks. Cena Café and Restaurant is at 2/L, Greenbelt 3. Call 7574030.

Leaño and . . .

From page C3

pre/post-World War II period (1930s-1960s), martial law (1972-1986) and post-Edsa I (1986-2000). The exhibit can be viewed until June 12 at Ayala Museum, Makati. Call 7577117 to 21.

THE CRUCIBLE Gallery presents Jordan Mendoza's 10 small bronze sculptures at SM Megamall. They are figures mostly from classical themes, which the artist uses to express what he calls "the strength, force, grace and beauty of the dynamic human form."

SBC ARTWORKS conducts a summer art workshop for 6 years old and above. On May 16, it will be held at Casa del Niño Montessori School, Pacita Complex, San Pedro, Laguna. Until May 31, it will be at Prime International Language Center & Tutorial Services, Olivarez Plaza, Biñan, Laguna. Sam Cruz, a member of Art Association of the Philippines, conducts the workshops. Call 0920-2362345.

THE ENTERPRISE Center mounts Joe Datuin's "The Colors of Summer" until May 5 at Art Hall, 3/L, Tower 2, Enterprise Building, cor. Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas, Makati. The exhibit features creations that capture the spirit of the season. The theme of each artwork ranges from kite-flying to sailing. Call 6971096 or 0917-7929020.

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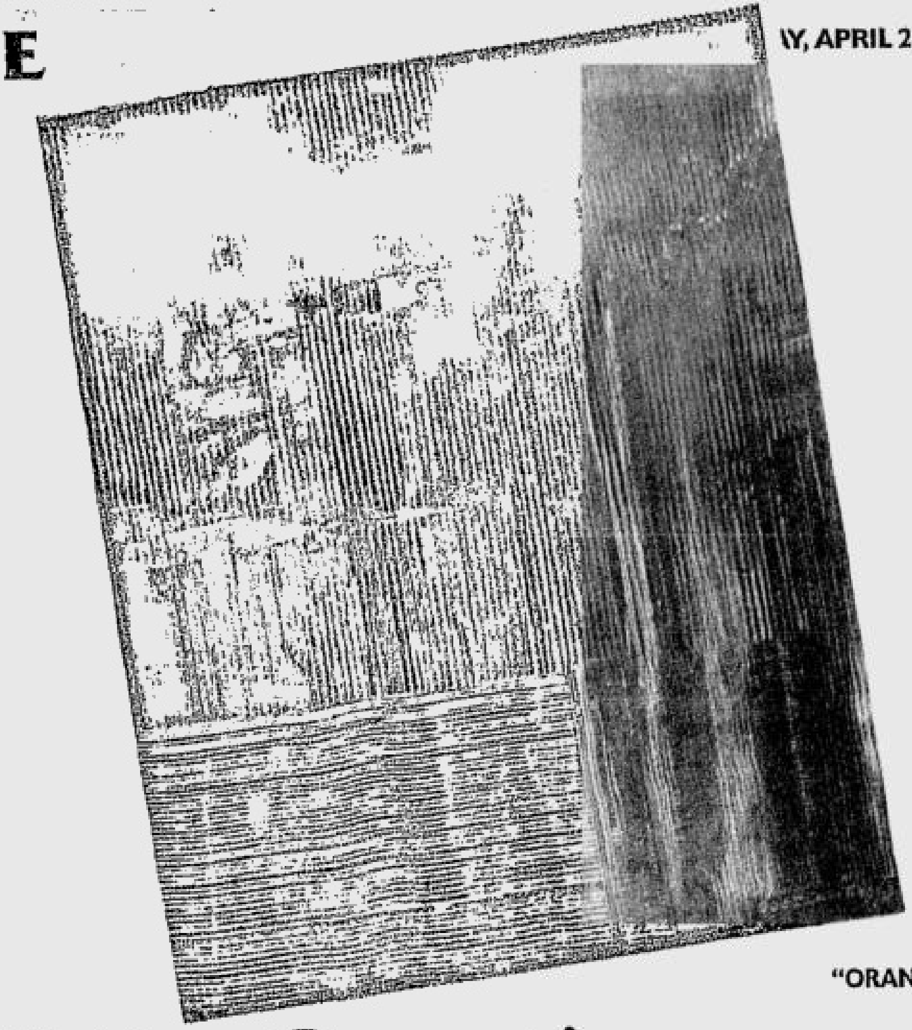

"ORANGE Sky"

Lito Carating gets friendly

By James P. Ong
Contributor

NORBERTO "Lito" Carating isn't exactly known for doing small art pieces. His huge canvas paintings—the biggest he's done measured 6 ft x 25 ft—are displayed in the country's most beautiful modern homes and typically composed of several panels; you couldn't fit one work into a service elevator even if you tried.

So it's exciting that, for the first time in his career, this leading abstract artist is finally exhibiting small, young collector-friendly pieces done on paper. The gig follows a sold-out group exhibit in October at Singapore's oldest art space, Artforum Gallery, where he was joined by Gus Albor, Nestor Vinluan and Roy Veneracion.

Carating's frequently changing palette has always left the art world in awe of him. His themes have also been varied; he painted an underwater series years before scuba diving

LITO/ C7

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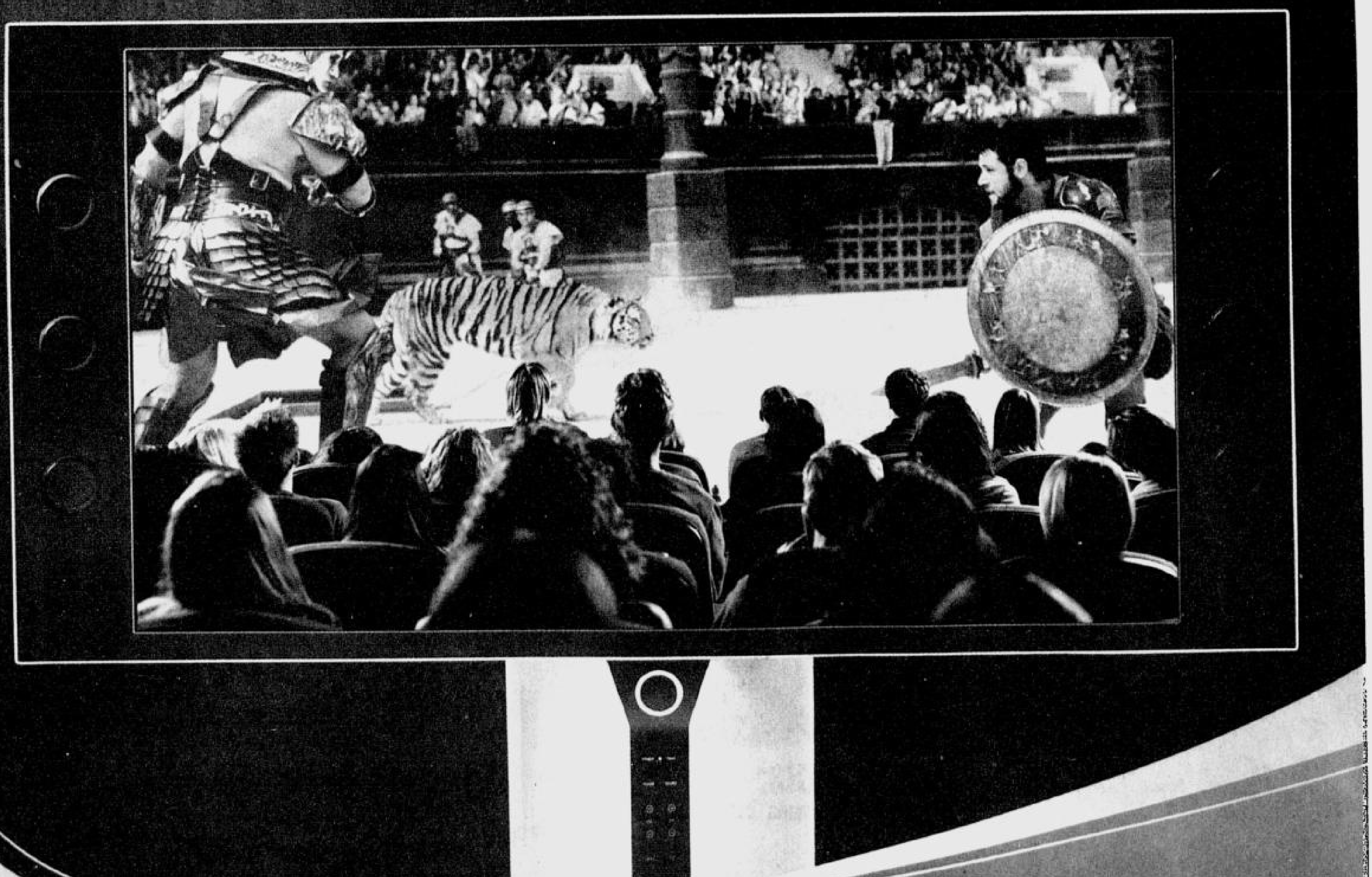

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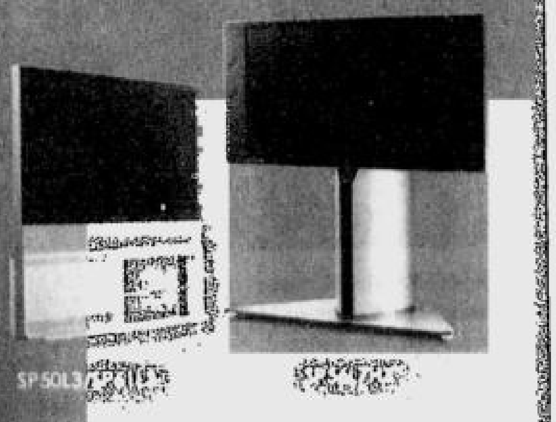

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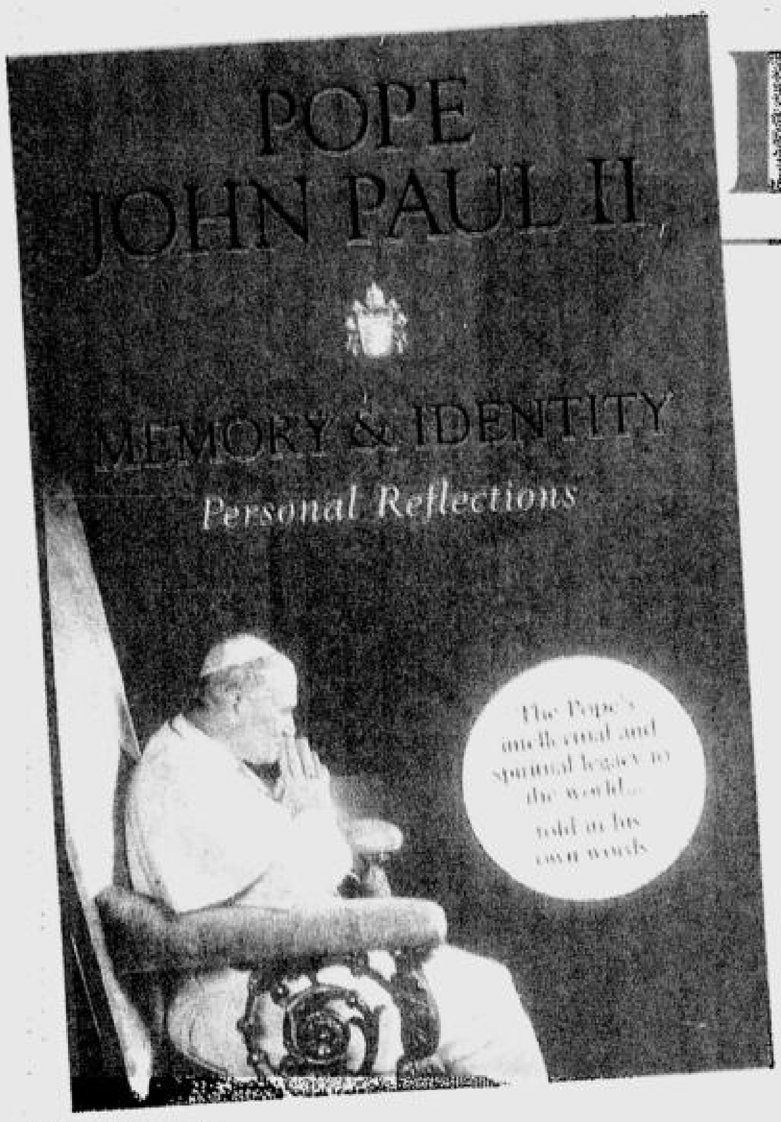
The last word from John Paul the Great


POPE
JOHN PAUL II
MEMORY & IDENTITY
Personal Reflections
The Pope's intellectual and spiritual legacy to the world... told in his own words

The Pope's last book tackles the existence of evil and warns Europe the dangers of its fading Christian 'memory'

By Lito B. Zulueta

RELEASED just a month before his death, "Memory and Identity" (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2005) may be viewed as Pope John Paul II's last will and testament in letters. Its provenance is not clear. Like his 1994 smash seller, "Crossing on the Threshold of Hope," it is based on

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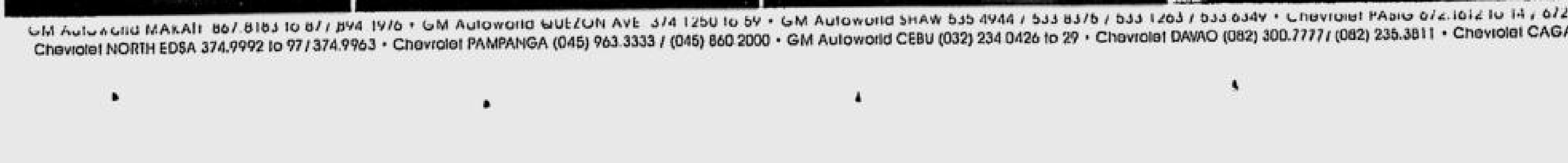
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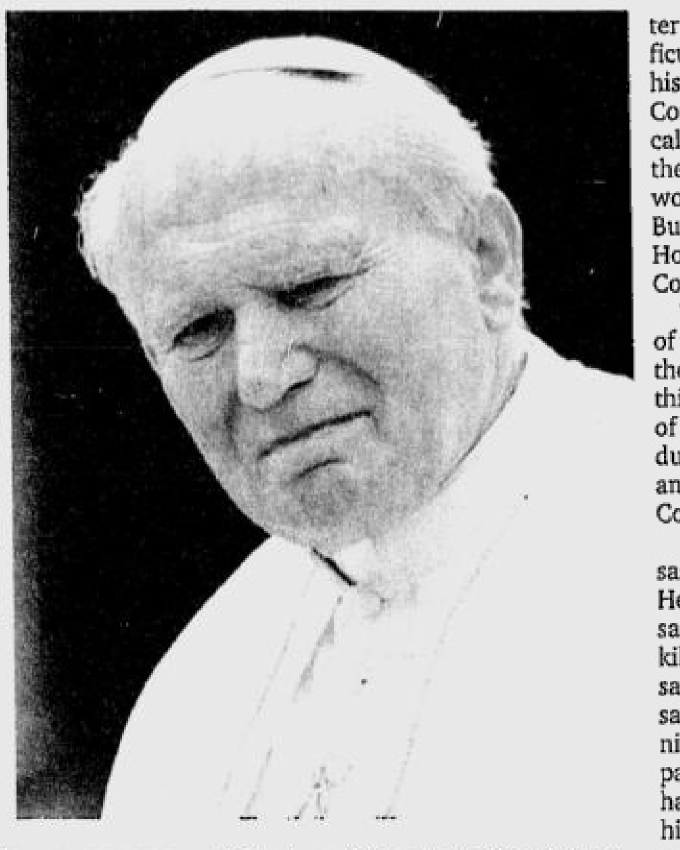
The last word from John Paul the Great

From page D1

interviews, apparently in questionnaire form, that he gave to two Polish philosophers. But the exchange was conducted in 1993, and it seems the Pope afterward had to labor to revise and refine his answers in the face of deteriorating health. We really don't know if the answers represent his updated thoughts up to the time his sickness got the better of him, but just the same, if the book is not the great Pope's definitive last statement of his fully evolved thought, it is at least his last flourish in literary bestsellerdom.

THE LATE Pope's last book considers Europe a "theatre" for the clash between good and evil. The "guidebook" will serve Benedict XVI (above), who has signaled his concern over the decline of Christianity in Europe.



And what a flourish! His subject is nothing less than the existence of evil. If squeamish readers find this off-putting, then the late Pope did not intend to pander to the gallery. He was a Christian realist through and through: "The history of mankind is the 'theatre' of the coexistence of good and evil. So even if evil exists alongside good, good perseveres beside evil and grows from the same soil, namely, human nature."

The "theatre" is Europe, and the historic evil forces the Pope refers to are fascism and communism. Filipino and other non-European readers may find it a letdown that in his last book, the Pope does not tackle global issues in a truly "Catholic" way. But the book's trajectory has really been determined by the interview format, so that the Polish interviewers led the Pope to answer questions ranging from Poland's history to European currents.

In a way, the Pope's last book may have prophesied the papacy of his successor, the former Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, whose chosen papal name, Benedict XVI, indicates he will throw the weight of the new papacy behind European concerns, such as the retreat of Christianity throughout much of Western civilization and the dwindling number of practicing continental Catholics. For the new Pope, his predecessor may have left this guidebook of sorts.

Philosophical

"Memory" is an intensely philosophical book, which is typical of the late Pope who explained geopolitical developments philosophically and philosophical issues geopolitically.

For John Paul, Europe is fast losing its Christian "memory," thus risking losing its "identity." He blames the enlightenment for the woes which attended Europe and the rest of the world during the last century, woes that he feels may be repeated in an integrated Europe that has forgotten God and would not like even the remotest mention of the name in its new charter to enshrine the union:

"The fall of the regimes built on ideologies of evil put an end to forms of extermination... However, there remains the legal extermination of human beings conceived but unborn... decreed by democratically elected parliaments, which invoke the notion of civil progress for society and for all humanity. Nor are other grave violations of God's law lacking... [like] the strong pressure from the European Parliament to recognize homosexual unions as an alternative type of family. It is legitimate and even necessary to ask whether this is not the work of another ideology of evil, more subtle and hidden..."

It is obvious from the passage that the Pope considers the false claims and hopes of the enlightenment—progress, civil society, secularism and liberalism—as the engines that drive the world to perdition.

"Why does all this happen? What is the root of these post-Enlightenment ideologies? The answer is simple: It happens because of the rejection of God *qua* Creator, and consequently *qua* sources determining what is good and what is evil."

Moreover: "I believe that a more careful study of this question could lead us beyond the Cartesian watershed. If we wish to speak rationally about good and evil, we have to return to St. Thomas Aquinas, that is, to the philosophy of being." Going back to the essence of existence, the Pope believes, will restore sanity and goodness in the world.

History and faith

If the Pope speaks a tad *ex cathedra* in these pages, it is because he has been through hell and back. Part of the uniqueness of this book is that he tackles Polish history with the eyes of faith. He asks why Poland became the theater of the totalitarianisms of the left and the right, and he remembers getting the answer from a Flemish friend while taking up higher theological studies at the Angelicum of Rome: "We are spared this in the West," his friend said, "because perhaps we could not have withstood such a trial. You [Polish Catholics], on the other hand, can take it."

It is tempting to see in the Pope's fascination for his friend's reply as a Polish Catholic's satisfaction after having been the whipping nation of history, and also sweet revenge, even if merely psychologically, at the other European nations that gave up so easily.

Indeed, could it explain John Paul's rejection of the liberal theologies of the Dutch, German and French Catholics? Could it explain his attachment to conservative Catholic movements such as the Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation, and Neo-Catechumate, movements that paint the world as one vast arena—or theater—where the battle between good and evil is waged?

In some passages, the Pope betrays his disgust at the evil operations of liberal capitalism. He may have been distrustful of Marxism, but he at least sees evil with the eyes of economic determinism: "This programme [of anti-evangelical currents in the West] is supported by enormous financial resources, not only in individual countries, but also on a world-wide scale. It has great centers of power at its disposal, through which it attempts to impose its own conditions on developing countries. Faced with all this, one may legitimately ask whether this is not another form of totalitarianism, subtly concealed under the appearances of democracy."

Assassination

The last part of the book features, poignantly enough, the Pope's conversations about his 1981 assassination with his trusted aide, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz.

The reader gets another glimpse of John Paul's holiness when, on the day after the shooting, waking up from the difficult operation, the Pope recalls telling his secretary, "Yesterday, I didn't say the Compline," referring to the last canonical prayer of the Catholic day. He was on the verge of death, and this Pope was worried he didn't say evening prayers! But Dziwisz corrects him: "To be precise, Holy Father, you asked me: 'Have I said Compline?'"

The assassination fits in with the focus of the book since the Pope suggests it was the handiwork of communist agents: "I think it was one of the final convulsions of the arrogant ideologies unleashed during the 20th century. Both fascism and Nazism eliminated people. So did Communism."

Touching, too, is his hope that his assassin, the Turkish Ali Agca, finds God. He recalls that Agca, a professional assassin, was dumbfounded for failing to kill him. When the Pope told him he was saved by the Blessed Mother since the assassination took place on May 13, anniversary of the Portuguese Marian apparitions, Agca was fascinated. "Ali Agca has probably sensed that over and above his own power, over and above the power of shooting and killing, there was a higher power. He then began to look for it. I hope and pray that he found it."

Since the interviews took place in 1993, the book does not cover more recent events. But the Pope obviously died with a guarded attitude and even suspicion toward the West.

In saying that Nazism and Communism failed because of "the utter absurdity of the large-scale violence that formed part of the theory and practice of those systems," is the Pope also signaling his distaste for the American war on Iraq, whose basis has been exposed a sham, a war that is fundamentally an exercise of power projection by a liberal capitalist superpower?

Although it is well-known that the Pope commended George W. Bush for his opposition to abortion, the book seems to lament the American leadership's violence-prone conduct, such as its support of capital punishment and its war-freakish if-you-are-not-with-us-then-you-are-against-us campaign against global terrorism.

"Will we be able to learn from the dramatic lessons of history?" the Pope asks in "Memory and Identity." "Or will we be prey once more to the passions at work in the human spirit, yielding yet again to the evil promptings of violence?"

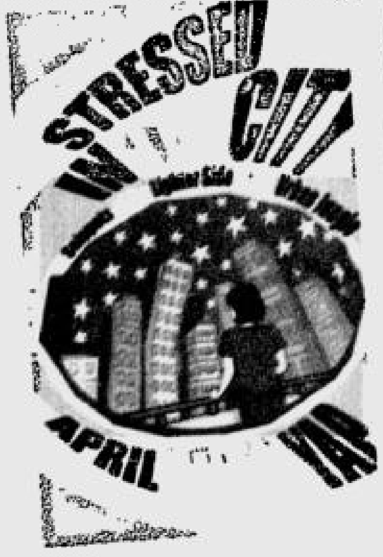
Available at National Bookstore and PowerBooks

'Stressed in the City'

MILFLORES Publishing, Inc. has released "Stressed in the City," the first book by April Timbol Yap.

Fortunately for all of us, the stressful life in crowded, bustling Metro Manila has its lighter side. In this unique book, a young writer's lighthearted snippets of the humorous side of urban living are conveyed through words and amusing illustrations.

In the first chapter, Yap takes the reader driving around the city, through streets that abound with fuchsia signs and sidewalks dotted with fuchsia male urinals, all the way to what she calls "The Ring of Death" at the Quezon Memorial Circle, where she says those who truly live swing from the innermost lane to an exit without losing speed while texting!



Then she takes the reader on an MRT ride, a walk through flooded streets during the rainy season, a tour of the sidewalk and fast-food dining options of the city, and a sampling of the night life for the young in Malate and Timog in places called "Rectum" and such. Of course, she goes malling with the reader. There is also a hospital stay, but to describe that would be to get ahead of the book.

The author teaches English literature at U.P. in Diliman, Quezon City, where she completed an M.A. in Mass Communications and where she is now finishing her Ph.D. studies in Creative Writing.

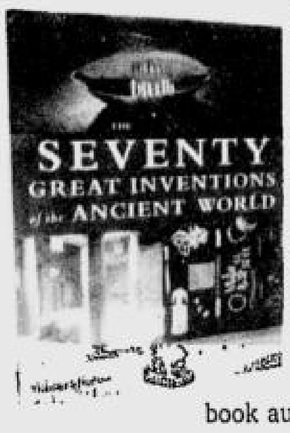
Robert Magnuson designed the cover and made the illustrations in his delightfully amusing style.

"Stressed in the City" is available at all National Book Stores, PowerBooks, Books for Less and other book stores at P250 a copy.

Call 7216431. E-mail milflores@pacific.net.ph.

Notable reads for raging summer

"THE SEVENTY Great Inventions of the Ancient World" is a unique guide to many of mankind's most remarkable early inventions, from the first crude stone tools to the innovations of the early medieval period. Drawing on modern science and the latest research, leading authorities explore some of the most fascinating devices crafted by the human mind. This book also includes fascinating photographs and informative diagrams, maps and plans.

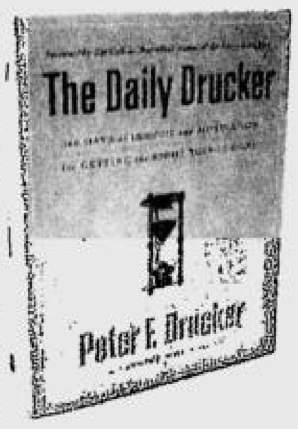


Nigella Lawson, Gourmet magazine's "It Girl," New York Times "Dining In" columnist and best-selling cookbook author, is celebrating life—and you're invited. "Feast," Nigella's most festive book yet, offers savory, spicy and delicious recipes for special occasions like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter or any time you simply want to celebrate good food and a good life.

NIGELLA LAWSON
Feast

This book is filled with festive recipes, plus Nigella's tips, tricks and shortcuts that will ensure you cook with ease, style and fun. "Feast" also includes some surprising gems, like Nigella's Chocolate Cake Hall of Fame and her best cheeseburger. A cookbook to treasure all year long.

Revered management guru Peter F. Drucker is your trusted guide in "The Daily Drucker," a thoughtful, day-to-day companion full of his practical wisdom. Amid the pressures of our daily work lives, "The Daily Drucker" provides inspiration and advice to help you meet these many challenges. With his trademark clarity, vision and humanity, Drucker sets out his ideas on a broad swath of key topics, from time management to innovation. These 366 daily readings have been harvested from a lifetime of work for a year of practical inspiration.



Available at National Book Store.

Hallmark program for leukemia victims receives Anvil

Hallmark for L.I.F.E. received recently an Anvil Award of Excellence from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines. Filstar Distributors Corporation president Maximo G. Licauco and L.I.F.E. president Winfred Hwang accepted the award during the 40th Anvil Awards ceremony.

Hallmark for L.I.F.E. is a project of Filstar Distributors Corporation, the exclusive distributor of Hallmark products in the Philippines, and L.I.F.E., a foundation for indigent leukemia victims. Through this partnership, Filstar aids the foundation by providing it with much-needed funds for the medical needs of its patients.

For nine years now, the project invites the country's leading artists and photographers to contribute works to serve as covers for special holiday cards. Portion of the proceeds goes to L.I.F.E.

ANVIL
AWARDS
Excellence

PRSP president Jones T. Campos, L.I.F.E. president Winfred Hwang, Filstar Distributors Corp. president Maximo Licauco III, Sen. Mar Roxas and Manila Water Company vice president Joel Lacsamana

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Book on human resources

THE ATENEO Center for Organization Research and Development (CORD) launched recently "The Way We Work: Research and Best Practices in Philippine Organizations," a compilation of articles on human resources, edited by Regina Hechanova and Edna Franco.

"The Way We Work" gathers together both scholarly and practical research results of faculty, graduate students and HR practitioners in 13 articles that cover a wide range of topics, which include the psychological make up of the Filipino worker, generational differences in work values, coping with work-induced stress and demands of family, rewards that work, managing resistance to new technology, and trends and issues in HR. There are also case studies showcasing insightful experiences of companies like Petron, Nestle and Soluziona. The book contains a foreword by Carmela D. Ortigas.

The book is published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press (4265984).

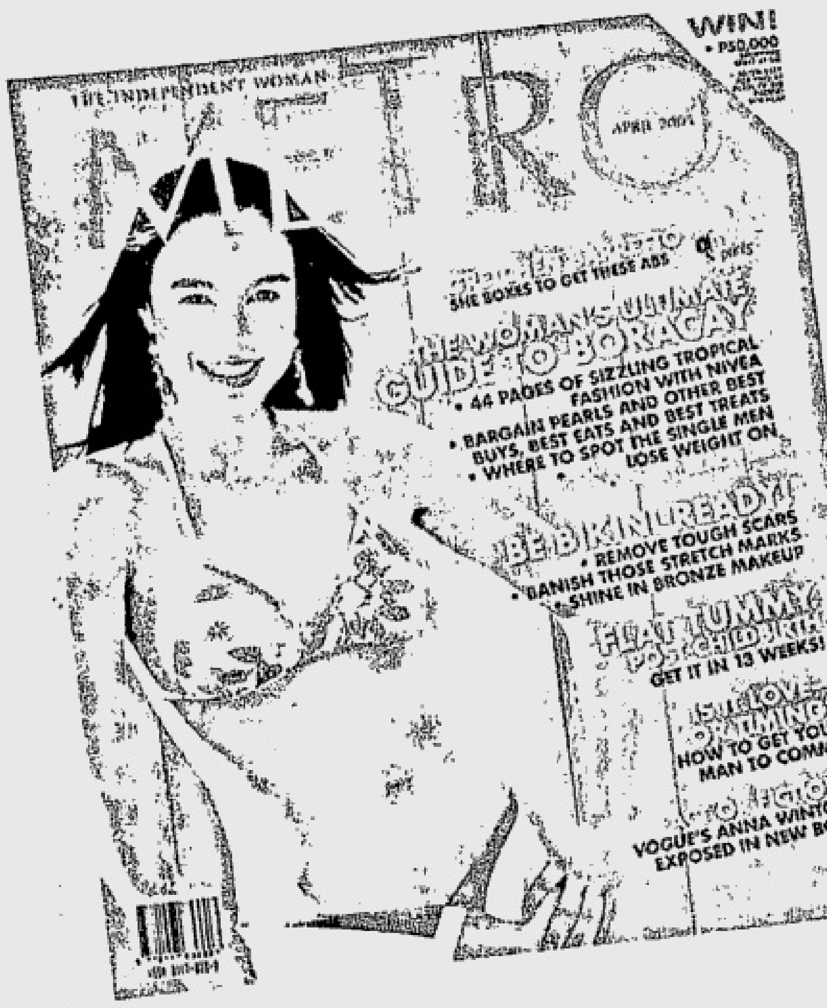
2005 Graphic-Nick Joaquin Literary Awards to be launched

THE PHILIPPINE Graphic News Weekly Magazine will launch the 2005 Philippine Graphic-Nick Joaquin Literary Awards for fiction in English on April 29, 5 p.m. at National Bookstore Shangri-La Edsa Mall, Mandaluyong City.

The event will also commemorate the first death anniversary of the late National Artist for literature, for whom the award was named. Joaquin was also Graphic corporate editor in chief and literary editor at the time of his death.

Graphic will also launch the fiction award at the opening of the Nick Joaquin Exhibit at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Intramuros, Manila on April 28. The magazine has contributed photographs, manuscripts, published works and personal effects to the National Artist's memorabilia.

The Philippine Graphic-Nick Joaquin Literary Award is presented by National Bookstore, Home Radio 97.9 FM, DWIZ 882 AM, Stieprox Anti-Dandruff Shampoo, Physiogel Cream and La Germania.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• SHINE IN BRONZE MAKEUP
GET IT IN 13 WEEKS!
HOW TO GET YOUR MAN TO COMMIT
VOGUE'S ANNA WINTOUR EXPOSED IN NEW BOOK

Metro mag surveys Boracay scene

EVER heard of the Boracay Beach Diet? It's the island's own take on the popular South Beach Diet.

"These are low-carb, high-protein dishes using healthy, organic products patterned after South Beach," says Rita Sanson of Pearl of the Pacific Resort, which offers the special diet in its lobby restaurant.

"We've heard of women who postpone their trip to Boracay because they're on the South Beach and they're afraid to break their diet when they get here," Sanson tells Metro in its April issue, where 37 pages are devoted to the Boracay scene from the trendiest beach wear now in the market to profiles of the island's 10 most important people, a definitive guide to the best eats, and most valuable shopping finds.

"The good news is that now you can be on the South Beach and still maintain your diet while in Boracay. And our restaurant is open to everyone, both guests and non-guests."

Cover girl Gretchen Barretto shows off her knock-out form and talks about her life and new love, boxing.

Metro is available nationwide. Call 4152852.

In other ABS-CBN Publishing publications, Working Mom magazine features award-winning actress Cherie Gil and daughter Bianca.

Food Magazine features chefs Myrna Segismundo, Claude Tayag, J Gamboa, Dennis Hipolito and Jundy Gueco as they give the *laing*, *adobo*, *sisig*, *karekare* and *ube haleya* a fabulous makeover.

Chalk Magazine, meanwhile, features the "boys of summer": Derek Ramsey, Mark San Diego, Drew Wolff, Ali Alejandro and other dream boats.

Pink magazine features teen singing sensation, JoJo, on the cover, and gives more tips, trends, makeovers and fabulous freebies.

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Just Chill!
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Oscar Villadolid's war memoirs off the press

JUST off the press is a no-holds-barred story about "Surviving World War II" by Oscar S. Villadolid, the veteran newsman and communicator who served as Philippine envoy to the Holy See in 1991-95.

In lively journalese, Villadolid relates how he helped dismantle the family automobile to hide it from Japanese Occupation forces who were capturing private vehicles. Later, he helped reassemble the car into a *jitney* and drove passengers around to earn extra money for his family.

The author narrates how his father, Deogracias V. Villadolid was wanted by Japanese forces and how they traveled from his home province of Batangas to his wife's province of Laguna and then back to various districts in Metro Manila so as to escape notice from the occupiers.

The aches and pains of travelling on top of a truck, sleeping like sardines in evacuation homes, eating nothing but dried fish and vegetables for weeks, being slapped in the face by a Japanese soldier and not being able to slap him back, and then being bumped unconscious by a speeding Japanese vehicle—these are among the author's well-remembered experiences during World War II.

Aside from his column series, "The Listening Post," which ran first in the Manila Bulletin during the 1960s, and later in Manila Standard and BusinessWorld; and his stories and editorials in the Philippines Herald where he served as editor in chief, Villadolid co-authored with his wife, Alice, the best-selling "The Impeachment of a President" about the Senate trial of Joseph Estrada which ended with his removal from the presidency in 2001.

DUO PIANO CONCERT
Anamaria G. de Guzman and Della G. Besa will perform in "Duetto," a duo-piano concert presented by the Cultural Center of the Philippines on April 27, at 8 p.m., at the Little Theater. Works of Ravel, Sunico, Piazzola, Copland and Poulenc will be played.

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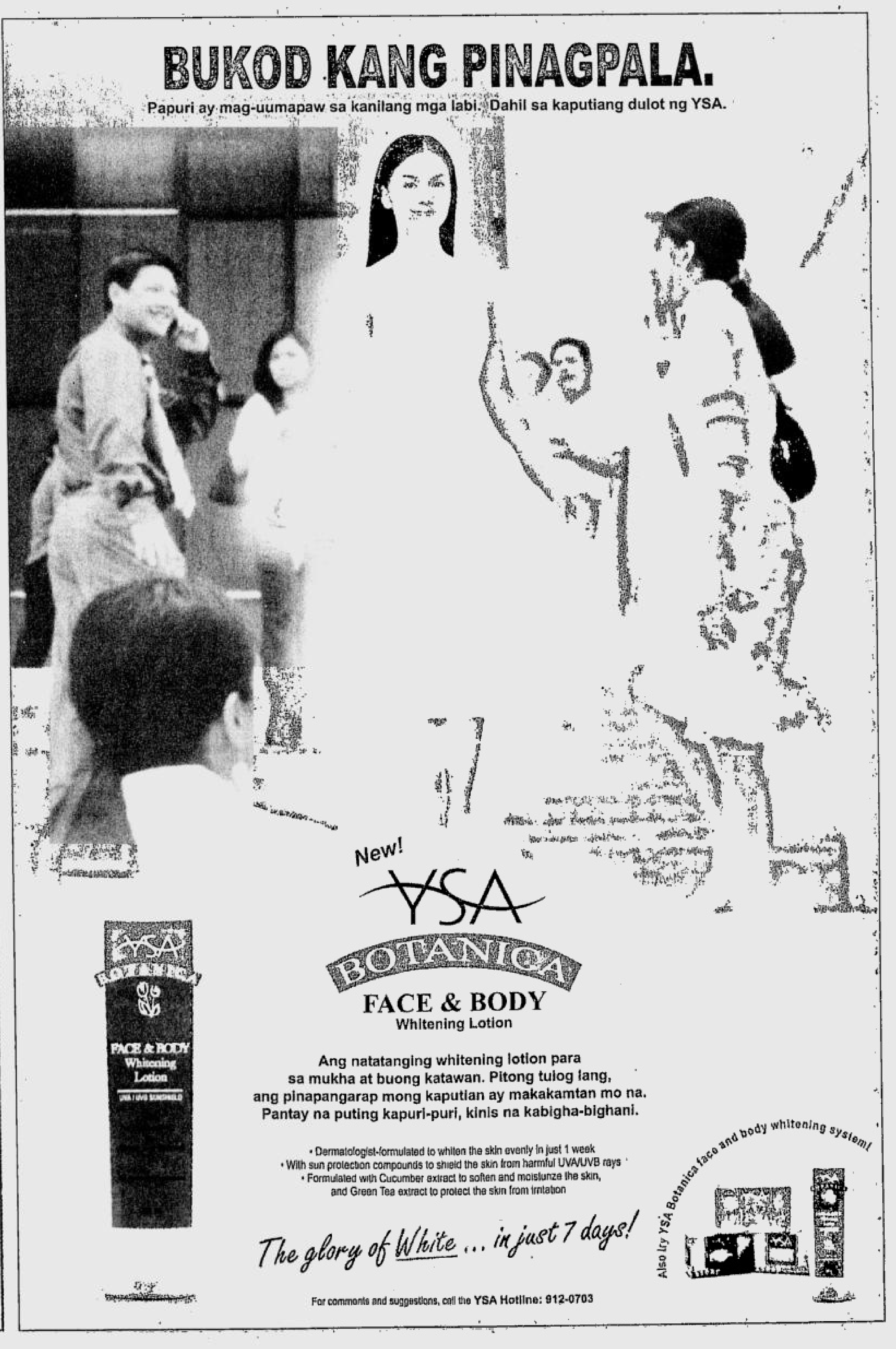
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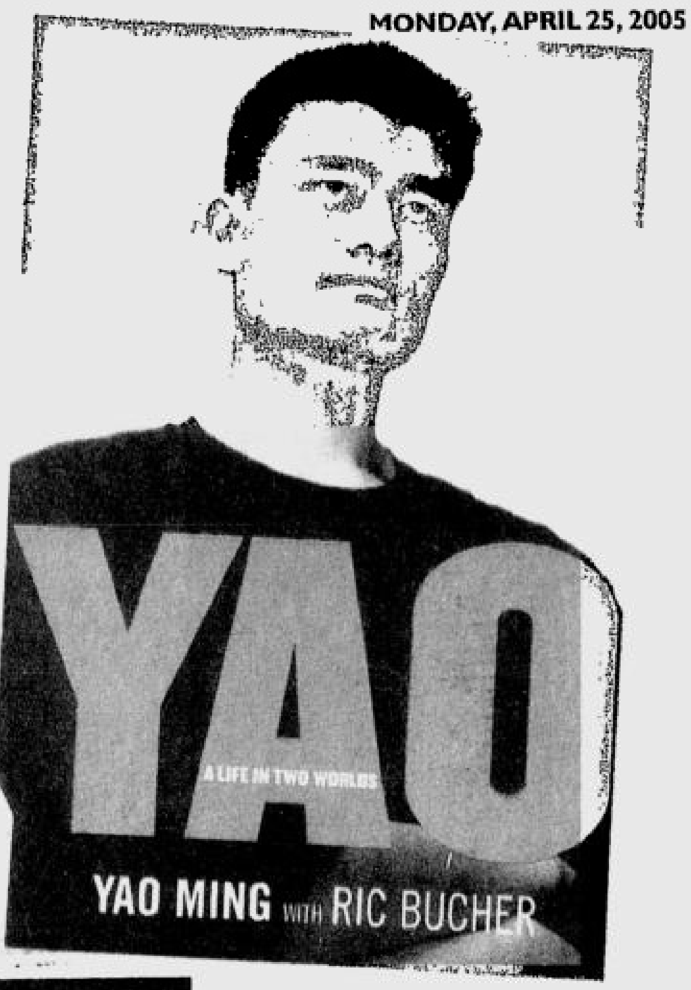
Yao Ming's tall tale

"Yao: A Life in Two Worlds"
By Yao Ming with Ric Bucher
Miramax Books New York
2004, 290 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

The NBA star's book, 'Yao: A Life in Two Worlds,' is a surprisingly humorous and thoughtful autobiography



WHO knew that someone so tall could be so funny?

People around the world, even those uninterested in basketball, know about how the 7'6" Chinese center Yao Ming energized the National Basketball Association (NBA) upon his arrival in 2003. But watching him man the paint for the Houston Rockets, one would get the idea that Yao, who arrived in the United States with a very limited English vocabulary, was a stoic and taciturn individual, the very picture of the inscrutable Oriental, albeit a very tall one.

Guess again. Yao is apparently a very funny and opinionated person, judging from his autobiography "Yao: A Life in Two Worlds."

Though co-authored and obviously manicured by ESPN The Magazine scribe Rich Bucher, "Life" successfully transplants Yao's quirky humor and his quiet intellect unto the printed page.

Unique challenge

Just as Yao isn't the stiff he initially appears to be, Yao also isn't the slow-moving behemoth of NBA lore. With his massive legs, soft hands and surprising coordination, Yao presents a unique challenge for defenders—and a Great Wall for players trying to drive on him.

"Life" also isn't a straightforward autobiography, at least not the way most expect. So much of "Life" may feature Yao speaking in first person, but a substantial portion is taken up by a large supporting cast quoted a la oral history.

Yao isn't the first Chinese player in the NBA: Wang Zhi Zhi and Mengke Bateer preceded him. In the book, the tortuous process by which Yao is finally brought to the NBA is chronicled in detail that, with Yao's alternating between determination and frustration, it plays out a bit like "Free Willy" in black high tops. There are times it honestly feels like Yao would never make his NBA debut due to bureaucratic hurdles and unexpected cultural clashes.

By the time Yao begins playing for the Rockets, the big man must adapt to a whole new language, a whole new speed of play and a whole new status as he becomes one of the NBA's most popular players, culminating in his selection as a starter over then-Los Angeles Laker Shaquille O'Neal in the NBA All-Star Game.

Yao has to develop as an athlete, grow as a person and settle into his role as the game's foremost international ambassador. This internal odyssey is charted in "Life"—with surprising results.

Contrary to his square-jawed, flattop appearance, Yao has a natural, easygoing comic touch. Of Denver Nugget Earl Boykins, currently the NBA's shortest player, Yao says "the first time I played against Boykins, who is 5'5", I thought a fan had run out of the stands to try and take the ball from me."

Of shock-haired muscle man Ben Wallace of the Detroit Pistons, Yao opines: "He was so scary, he made me forget how to play basketball."

There are humorous occurrences in Yao's life that seem too strange to be true, but they are. Among these weird events are Yao's encounters with a bizarre song made in his name, his quest to learn how to drive and his various misadventures involving footwear.

Engaging, thoughtful

Yao proves himself to be quite an engaging and thoughtful author, particularly when he decides to open up. There is actually an entire chapter on his longtime girlfriend Ye Li, also a Chinese national player and the reason Yao wears a red band around his left wrist. Beyond that, he says he is close to his parents. These recollections exude an unexpected gentleness, warmth and shyness.

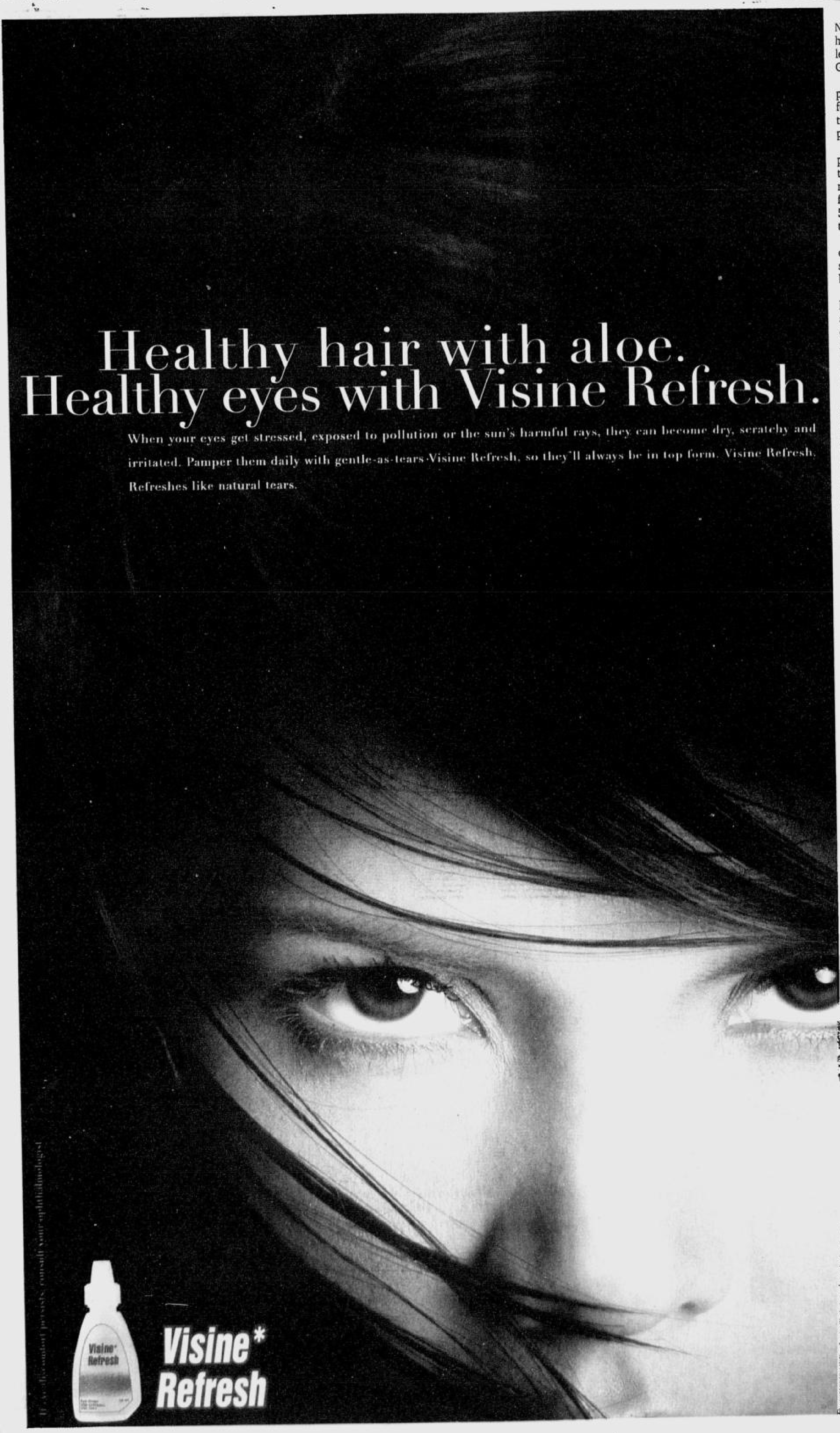
But "Life" also feels somewhat stunted and stiff at parts. When Yao speaks on the Communist structure of life in China, he speaks passionately and intelligently, but also in a rather preachy manner, particularly compared to how compact and candid he is in the other parts of "Life."

Though there are colored photographs, the provided visuals simply aren't enough to properly complement the story.

Perhaps the most crucial consideration involves the scope of "Life" itself. Despite his considerable achievements, Yao is still quite young by athletic standards (at 24, he is currently in his third season) and "Life" really is recording a beginning more than anything else.

Despite all that, "Yao Ming: A Life in Two Worlds" is a surprisingly agile read, full of little observations and big ideas that make it a worthwhile read. No tall tale, it is a testament to the unique life of a unique NBA superstar and not a vanity biography by a long shot.

Available in hardcover from selected National Book Store branches and PowerBooks.



When your eyes get stressed, exposed to pollution or the sun's harmful rays, they can become dry, scratchy and irritated. Pamper them daily with gentle-as-tears Visine Refresh, so they'll always be in top form. Visine Refresh. Refreshes like natural tears.

WRISTWATCH ANNUAL
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Watching for wristwatches at National Bookstore

"THE WRISTWATCH Annual 2005" is a definitive book for the mechanical wristwatches collector. Following the success of last year's book, this new annual compilation features over 1,700 of the world's most luxurious wristwatches, complete with color photographs and specifications for each watch. This is a must-have for every wristwatch aficionado.

Available at selected National Book Store outlets.